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# FOLK-LORE OF NORTHERN INDIA

YAMA, GOD OF DEATH,
BORNE BY HIS MESSENGERS.

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# FOLK-LORE

OF

# NORTHERN INDIA.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE EVIL EYE AND THE SCARING OF GHOSTS.

Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.
Virgil, *Eclogues*, iii. 103.

Asma 'bint 'Umais relates that she said, "O Prophet! the family of Ja' afar are affected by the baneful influence of the Evil Eye. May I use spells for them or not?" The Prophet said, "Yes; for if there were anything in the world which would overcome fate, it would be the Evil Eye."—Miskât, xxi.-i. Part II.

The belief in the baneful influence of the Evil Eye prevails widely.[1] According to Pliny,[2] it was one of the special superstitions of the people of India, and at the present day it forms an important part of the popular belief. But the investigation of its principles is far from easy. It is very closely connected with a number of kindred ideas on the subject of diabolical influence, and few natives care to speak about it except in a furtive way. In fact, it is far too serious

[1] For some of the literature of the Evil Eye see Tylor, "Early History," 134; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 187 sq.; Westropp, "Primitive Symbolism," 58 sqq.; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 8.

[2] "Natural History," vii. 2.

a matter to be discussed lightly. Walking about villages, you will constantly see special marks on houses, and symbols and devices of various kinds, which are certainly intended to counteract it; but hardly any one cares directly to explain the real motive, and if you ask the meaning of them, you will almost invariably be told that they are purely decorative, or that they have been made with some object which obviously conceals the real basis of the practice.

One, and perhaps the most common theory of the Evil Eye is that "when a child is born, an invisible spirit is born with it; and unless the mother keeps one breast tied up for forty days, while she feeds the child with the other (in which case the spirit dies of hunger), the child grows up with the endowment of the Evil Eye, and whenever any person so endowed looks at anything constantly, something will happen to it."[1] So, in Ireland we are told that "the gift comes by Nature and is born with one, though it may not be called into exercise unless circumstances arise to excite the power; then it comes to act like a spirit of bitter and malicious envy that radiates a poisonous atmosphere, which chills and blights everything within its reach."[2]

In Bombay the "blast of the Evil Eye is supposed to be a form of spirit possession. In Western India all witches and wizards are said to be, as a rule, evil-eyed. Of the rest, those persons only who are born under certain circumstances are believed to be evil-eyed. The circumstances are as follows:—Among the Hindus it is believed that when a woman is pregnant, she begins to conceive peculiar longings from the day of conception, or from the fifth month. They consist in eating various fruits and sweetmeats, in walking under deep shades, or in gardens where brooks gurgle, or in putting on rich clothes or ornaments, and in many other like things. If in the case of any woman these desires are not gratified, the child whom she gives birth to becomes weak and voracious, and is said to have an Evil Eye. If

[1] Ibbetson, "Panjâb Ethnography," 117.
[2] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 24.

such a person sees a man or woman eat anything which he feels a longing for, the eater either vomits what he or she has eaten, or falls sick. By some it is believed that if a person come from without at the time of dinner, and enters the house without washing his feet, the man who is eating becomes sick or vomits the food he has eaten, or does not feel longing for food for some time, until the blast of the Evil Eye is warded off." Mr. Campbell explains this on the principle that "as he comes from places where three or four roads meet, and which are spirit haunts, an evil spirit accompanies him without entering his body, from the place of its residence by which he has passed. If he washes his feet, the spirit goes back; but if he enters the house with spirit-laden feet, the spirit enters the house with him, and affects any one of the persons eating." [1]

The real fact seems to be that in most cases the Evil Eye is the result of covetousness.[2] Thus, a man blind of an eye, no matter how well-disposed he may be, is almost certain to envy a person blessed with a peculiarly good pair of eyes. But if the blind man's attention be distracted by something conspicuous in the appearance of the other, such as lamp-black on his eyelids, a mole, or a scar, the feeling of dissatisfaction, which is fatal to the complete effect of the envious glance, is certain to arise. This theory that the glance may be neutralized or avoided by some blot or imperfection is the basis of many of the popular remedies or prophylactics invented with the object of averting its influence.

Hence comes the device of making an intentional blot in anything one values, so that the glance of the Evil Eye may be deprived of its complete satisfaction. Thus, most people put lampblack on the eyes of their children as a protection against fascination, because black is a colour hateful to evil spirits; it has the additional advantage of protecting the eye from the fierce heat of the Indian summer. Women when delivery approaches often mark themselves with black

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 207

[2] On this see valuable notes by W. Cockburn in "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 14.

to avert the demon who causes protracted labour. It is also believed that a person whose eyelids are encircled with lampblack is incapable of casting the Evil Eye himself; and it is considered nice in a woman to ornament herself in this way, since because she herself, except at some crisis of her life, such as marriage or parturition, is not liable to fascination, it shows her indisposition to covet the beauty of others, with the inference that she has no cause to do so.

On the same principle, when a parent has lost a child by any disease which, as is usually the case, can be attributed to fascination or other demoniacal influence, it is a common practice to call the next baby by some opprobrious name, with the intention of so depreciating it that it may be regarded as worthless, and so protected from the Evil Eye of the envious. Thus a male child is called Kuriya or "Dunghill;" Kadheran or Ghasîta, "He that has been dragged along the ground;" Dukhi or Dukhita, "The afflicted one;" Phatingua, "Grasshopper;" Jhingura, "Cricket;" Bhîkhra or Bhîkhu, "Beggar;" Gharîb, "Poor," and so on. So, a girl is called Andhrî, "Blind;" Tînkauriyâ or Chhahkauriyâ, "She that was sold for three or six cowry shells;" Dhuriyâ, "Dusty;" Machhiyâ, "Fly," and so on.[1]

All this is connected with what the Scotch call "forespeaking," when praise beyond measure, praise accompanied with a sort of amazement or envy, is considered likely to be followed by disease or accident.[2] Thus Professor Rhys writes of the Isle of Man:[3] "You will never get a Manxman to say that he is very well. He usually admits that he is 'middling;' and if by any chance he risks a stronger adjective, he hastens to qualify it by saying 'now' or 'just now,' with an emphasis indicative of his anxiety not to say too much. His habits of speech point back to the time

[1] For many lists of such names see Temple, "Proper Names of Panjâbis," 22 sqq.; "Indian Antiquary," viii. 321 sq.; x. 321 sq.; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 26, 51; iii. 9.

[2] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 35.

[3] "Folk-lore," iii. 85.

when the Manx mind was dominated by the fear of awaking malignant influences in the spirit world around him." So, in Ireland, to avoid being suspected of having the Evil Eye, it is necessary when looking at a child to say, "God bless it!" and when passing a farmyard where the cows are collected for milking to say, "The blessing of God be on you and all your labour!"[1]

The same customs prevail in India. Thus, if a native gentleman brings his child to visit a European, he dislikes to hear it praised, unless the praise be accompanied with some pious ejaculation. And it is safer to speak in a complimentary way of some conspicuous ornament or piece of dress, which is always put on as a protective.

In connection with the question of naming, a reference may be made to some taboos which are probably based on similar principles. A name is part of a person in the belief of savages, and a man can be injured through his name as well as through the parings of his nails or hair, which are carefully looked after. Thus with all Hindus two names are given to children, one secret and used only for ceremonial purposes, and the other for ordinary use. The witch if she learns the real name can work her evil charms through it.[2] Hence arises the use of many contractions and perversions of the real name and many of the nicknames which are generally given to children, as well as the ordinary terms of endearment which are constantly employed. We have this name taboo coming out in a cycle of folk-tales, such as "Rumpelstilzchen," "Tom Titty Tot," and "Whuppity Stoorie." Here the imp or gnome has a secret name of his own, which he thinks it impossible for any one to find out, and he himself uses it only when he thinks he is sure to be alone.

This seems to be the most rational explanation of the curious taboo according to which a Hindu woman will not

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 20.

[2] "Folk-lore," i. 273; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 242; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 243; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 119 sq.

name her husband, or if she wants to refer to him, does so in some indirect way as the father of her child and so on. To this, however, there is one notable exception. Thus, writing of Bombay, Mr. Campbell says:[1] "At marriages, coming of age, first pregnancy and festive days, such as the Nâgpanchamî and Mangalâ Gaurî in August, it is usual for the woman to recite some couplet or verse in which the husband's name occurs. At marriages this naming is, in practice, little more than a game. An old man or an old lady gets close to the door and refuses to allow the young women to go until they have told their husbands' name. At the pregnancy ceremony the same custom is observed." Mr. Campbell takes this to be "part of a ceremony whose object is to drive to a distance any spirits whose influence might blight the tender life of the unborn child. This seems natural when it is remembered that the names of men are either the names of gods, of precious stones, or of spices, all of which have a power to scare spirits; and as repeating the thousand names of Mahâdeva is a service in which he greatly delights, apparently because it keeps spirits at a distance, so this repeating of the husband's and wife's name seems to have the same object." The name, in other words, is kept secret on account of its sanctity, and the custom would be based on the same rules of taboo which have been designed among most savages for the protection of kings and other persons of dignity from the influence of evil spirits.

Another mode of protecting boys from demoniacal influence is based on the same idea of the blot of imperfection. Boys of rich parents are often dressed in mean or filthy clothes so that they may be considered unworthy of the malic ous glance of some envious neighbour or enemy.

Still another device, that of dressing up the boy during infancy a a girl, in other words a pretended change of sex, may perhaps lead us on the track of a possible explanation of some very curious and obscure practices in Europe.

[1] "Notes," 400.

We know that legends of actual change of sex are not unknown in Indian folk-lore. Thus, we have the very primitive legend of Idâ or Ilâ, who was the daughter of the Manu Vaivaswata, who prayed to Mitra and Varuna for a boy and was given a girl. But the prayers of her father to the deities resulted in her being changed into a man, Sudyumna. Siva changed him back again into a woman, and she, as Ilâ, became the wife of Budha. In more modern times we have the very similar story of the daughter of the Bhadauriya Râja. He had a daughter, who was seized by force for the seraglio of the Emperor at Delhi, but she fled to the temple of Devî at Batesar and by the aid of the goddess was changed into a boy. By another version of the tale he arranged with another Râja that their children should be contracted, if one chanced to be a boy and the other a girl. Both had daughters, but the Râja concealed the circumstance and allowed the marriage to go on as if his child was a son. When the fraud was detected the girl tried to commit suicide in the Jumnâ, but came out a boy, and everyone was satisfied.[1]

One explanation of the custom of pretended change of sex as shown in the case of the Amazons, has been thus explained by Mr. Abercromby:[2] "The great desire of women, more especially during a period of warlike barbarism, is to bear male children. Turning our attention to the result of flattening a girl's breasts and letting her wear male attire, it is obvious that a sex distinction has been obliterated, and she has become externally assimilated to a male youth. Moreover, the object has evidently been intentional. It would be no outrage to the reasoning powers of the Sarmatians to suppose that they believed a woman's chances of bearing male children were vastly enhanced by her wearing a man's dress, and by being in some degree conformed to the male type by forcible compression of the breasts during maidenhood. They would argue thus: a woman wants to

[1] Cunningham, "Archæological Reports," vii. 6.
[2] "Folk-lore," ii. 179.

bear male children, therefore she ought to be made as much like a man as possible. A conviction of this kind is gained by a process identical with the immature reasoning that underlies what is called sympathetic magic."

This may possibly be one explanation of the practice among Chamârs and other low castes in Northern India, when at marriages boys dress up as women and perform a rude and occasionally obscene dance. Among the Modh Brâhmans of Gujarât, at marriages, the bridegroom's maternal uncle, whose special position is almost certainly a survival from times when descent through the mother was the only recognized form, dresses as a Jhanda or Pathân Faqîr, whose ghost is dangerous, in woman's clothes from head to waist, and in men's clothes below, rubs his face with oil, daubs it with red powder, goes with the bride and bridegroom to a place where two roads meet (which, as we have seen, is a haunt of spirits), and stays there till the pair offer the goddess food.[1]

Now, there are numerous customs which have been grouped in Europe under the name of the False Bride. Thus, among the Esthonians the false bride is enacted by the bride's brother dressed in woman's clothes; in Polonia by a bearded man called the Wilde Brant; in Poland, by an old woman veiled in white, and lame; again, among the Esthonians, by an old woman with a birch-bark crown; in Brittany, where the substitutes are first a little girl, then the mistress of the house, and lastly, the grandmother.[2]

The supposition may then be hazarded, that in the light of the Indian examples the object may be that some one assumes the part of the bride in order to divert on himself from her the envious glance of the Evil Eye. With the same object it is very common in India to bore the noses of little boys and thus to make them resemble girls. The usual names of Nathu or Bulâqi, the former where the ring was placed in the side of the nose and the latter in the septum, are evidence of this.

[1] "Bombay Gazetteer," v. 45 sq.

[2] "Folk-lore," iv. 147.

The theory of the blot of imperfection again appears in the custom of not washing the face of a little boy till he is six years old.[1] Similarly, young men, if vigorous and stout, consider themselves very liable to the fascination of lean people, and tie a rag round the left arm, or a blue thread round their necks, often twisting the blue feathers of the roller bird into the thread as an additional precaution. Nor do they care to expose their bodies to the public gaze, but wear a light shawl of a gaudy colour, even in the warmest season of the year. Should such a youth, if sufficiently conceited about his personal appearance, detect a suspicious person looking at him, he will immediately pretend to limp, or contort his face and spasmodically grasp his ankle or his elbow as if he were in pain, to distract and divert the attention he fears.

So, all natives dread being stared at, particularly by Europeans; and you will often see a witness cast his eyes on the ground when the magistrate looks him full in the face, sometimes because he knows he is lying and fears the consequences, but it is often done through fear of fascination. A European, in fact, is to the rustic a strange inscrutable personage, gifted with many occult powers both for good and evil, and there are numerous extraordinary legends current about him. We shall return to this in dealing with the wonderful Momiâî story. Here it may be noted that he has control over the Jinn. There was a place near Dera Ghâzi Khân so possessed by them that passers-by were attacked. A European officer poured a bottle of brandy on the spot and no Jinn has been seen there ever since. A very dangerous ghost which some time ago used to infest a road in the Rûrki Cantonment was routed in the same way by an artilleryman, who spat on him when he came across him one dark night. The nails of a European, like those of the Râkshasá, distil a deadly poison, and hence he is afraid to eat with his fingers, as all reasonable people do, and prefers to use a knife and fork.

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 42.

A few other examples illustrating the same principle may be given here. When a man is copying a manuscript, he will sometimes make an intentional blot. A favourite trick is to fold the paper back before the ink of the last line has time to dry, so as to blot and at the same time make it appear the result of chance. We have noticed the same idea in the case of carpet patterns. A similar irregularity is introduced in printing chintzes and like handicrafts, and this goes a long way to explain the occasional and almost unaccountable defects to be found in some native work. The letter from a Râja is spotted with gold leaf, partly to divert fascination and partly to act as a scarer of demons. In fact the two conceptions meet and overlap all through the theory of these protectives.

Another plan is to paint up some hideous figure on the posts or arch of the door. The figure of a Churel or the caricature of a European with his gun is often delineated in this way. Others paint a figure of Yamarâja or some of the gods or saints for the same purpose, and the regular guardian deities, like Hanumân, Bhairon, or Bhîm Sen, often figure on these protective frescoes. So in Italy Mania was a most frightful spirit. "Her frightful image used to be hung over the doors to frighten away evil. This is quite identical with the old Assyrian observance recorded by Lenormant of placing the images of evil or dreaded deities in places to scare away the demons themselves."[1]

Confectioners, when one of their vessels of milk is exposed to view, put a little charcoal in it, as careful Scotch mothers do in the water in which they wash their babies.[2] The idea is probably connected with the use of fire as a charm. In Scotland it used to be the practice to throw a live coal into the beer vat to avert the influence of the fairies, and a cow's milk was secured against them by a burning coal being passed across her back and under her belly immediately after calving.[3] In India, if a cow gives a large quantity of

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 53.
[2] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 7.
[3] Brand, "Observations," 753.

milk, the owner tries to hide it, and if it chances to get sour, he attributes the loss to fascination, or the machinations of some enemy, witch, or demon. A mother while dressing her baby makes a black mark on its cheek, and before a man eats betel he pinches off the corner of the leaf as a safe-guard. When food is taken to the labourer in the field, a piece of charcoal or copper coin is placed in the basket as a preservative; and when horses while feeding throw a little grain on the ground, it is not replaced, because the horse is believed to do this to avoid fascination. Grooms, with the same object, throw a dirty duster over the withers of a horse while it is feeding, and they are the more particular to do this when it is new moon or moonlight, when spirits are abroad. In the same way, when a man purchases food in the open market, he throws a little into the fire, and when a man is having a specially good dinner, he should select an auspicious moment and do the same. The same idea accounts for various customs of grace-giving at meals. Thus, when the Brâhmans at Pûna begin dinner they repeat the name of Govinda; the Shenavis say, *Har! Har! Mahâdeva*, and when half finished sing verses; the Mhârs never eat without saying *Krishnarpana!* or "It is dedicated to Krishna";[1] the Muhammadan, when he begins to eat, says, *Bismillah!*—"In the name of God!" and when he finishes he says, *Al-hamdulillah!*—"Praise be to God!" Orthodox Hindus pretend that this offering of food at a meal is a sacrifice to Annadeva, the god of food; but here many varied beliefs, such as fear of fascination, earth and fire worship, appear to combine to establish these and similar practices.

We now come to consider the various articles which are believed to have the power of scaring spirits, and counteracting demoniacal influence of various kinds.

First among these is iron. Why iron has been regarded as a scarer of demons has been much debated. Natives of India will tell you that it is the material out of which

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 184.

weapons are made, and that an armed man should fear nothing. Others say that its virtues depend on its black colour, which, as we shall see, is obnoxious to evil spirits. Mr. Campbell[1] thinks the explanation may be that in all cases of swooning and seizures iron is of great value, either applied in the form of the cautery or used as a lancet to let blood. The real reason is probably a very interesting survival of folk-thought. We know that in many places the stone axe and arrow head of the Age of Stone are invested with magic qualities, and Mr. Macritchie has gone so far as to assume that the various so-called fairy houses and fairy hills which abound in Europe are really the abodes of a primitive pigmy race, which survive to our days as the fairies. The belief in the fairies would thus go back to a time anterior to the use of metals, and these supernatural beings would naturally feel an abhorrence for iron, a new discovery and one of the greatest ever made by man. There is good evidence in custom that the Age of Stone existed in many places up to comparatively modern times. The Hebrews used a stone knife for circumcision, their altars were forbidden to be hewn, and even Solomon ordered that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron should be heard while his Temple was building. The same idea appears in many cases in India. The Magahiya Doms, who are certainly one of the most primitive races in the country, place iron under a stringent taboo, and any Magahiya who breaks into a house with an iron implement is not only put out of caste, but it is believed that some day or other he will lose his eyesight. The Agariyas, the primitive iron smelters of the Central Indian Hills, have deified iron under the form of Lohâsura, as the Kaseras or brass-founders worship brass as Kansâsura.

This idea appears in many various forms. We have already noticed the use of iron as a charm against hail. In the same way a sword or knife is placed in the bed of the young mother. She is, at this crisis of her life, particularly

[1] "Notes," 34.

exposed to the influence of evil spirits, as the Scotch fairies are very fond of milk, and try to gratify their desires on "unsained" or unchurched women.[1] There is a case in the Indian Law Reports, where the knife thus placed near the woman was used to murder her.[2] Pliny advises that a piece of iron should be placed in the nest of a sitting hen to save her eggs from the influence of thunder. This is now done in Sicily, with the object of absorbing every noise which might be injurious to the chickens.[3] So, the Indians of Canada put out swords in a storm to frighten off the demon of thunder.[4] The common belief is that the evil spirit is such a fool that he runs against the sharp edge of the weapon and allows himself to be wounded.

The magic sword constantly appears in folk-lore. We have Excalibur and Balmung; in the tales of Somadeva it confers the power of making the wearer fly through the air and renders him invincible; the snake demon obtains from the wars of the Gods and the Asuras the magic sword Vaiduryakanti. "Whatever man obtains that sword will become a chief of the Siddhas and roam about unconquered; and that sword can only be obtained by the aid of heroes."[5]

While a house is being built, an iron pot, or a pot painted black, which is good enough to scare the demon, is always kept on the works, and when it is finished the young daughter of the owner ties to the lintel a charm, which is also used on other occasions, the principal virtue of which consists in a small iron ring. Here is combined the virtue of the iron and the ring, which is a sacred circle. In India iron rings are constantly worn as an amulet against disease, as in Ireland an iron ring on the fourth finger cures rheumatism. The mourner, during the period of ceremonial impurity, carries a knife or a piece of iron to drive off the

[1] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 5. 60, 62.
[2] Reg. vs. Lalla, "Nizâmat Adâlat Reports," 22nd September, 1853.
[3] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 281.
[4] "Folk-lore," i. 154.
[5] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 386, 575; ii. 64.

ghost of the dead man, and the bridegroom in the marriage procession wears a sword as a protection; if he cannot procure a licence from a magistrate to carry a real sword, he gets one made of lath, which is good enough to frighten the evil spirit. In this case he fastens an iron spike to the point. On the same principle the blacksmith's anvil is used as a hail charm, and any one who dares to sit on it is likely to be punished for the contempt by an attack of boils. The Romans used to drive large nails into the side posts of the door with the same object. We have already noticed the value of iron nails for the purpose of laying the ghost of the Churel, and such nails are in India very commonly driven into the door-post or into the legs of the bed, with the object of resisting evil spirits. The horse-shoe is one special form of the charm. The wild Irish, we are told, used to hang round the necks of children the beginning of St. John's Gospel, a crooked nail out of a horse-shoe, or a piece of wolf-skin. Why the horse-shoe should be used in this way has been much debated. Mr. Farrer thinks it may be connected with the respect paid to the horse in folk-lore.[2] The Irish say that the reason is that the horse and ass were in the stall when Christ was born, and hence are blessed for evermore.[3] The idea that its shape connects it with the Yonî and phallicism hardly deserves mention. One thing is clear, that the element of luck largely enters into the matter; the shoe must have been found by chance on the road. Mr. Leland says, "To find and pick up anything, at once converts it into a fetish, or insures that all will go well with it, if we say when taking it up, 'I do not pick it up,'—naming the object—'I pick up good luck, which may never abandon me!'"[4] This, combined with the general protective power of iron, is probably a sufficient explanation of the practice. The custom is common in India. The great gate of the mosque at Fatehpur Sîkri is covered with them, and the practice is general at many shrines.

[1] Brand, "Observations," 339.
[2] "Primitive Manners," 293.
[3] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 181.
[4] "Etruscan Roman Remains," 264.

There is also a cycle of legends which connect iron with the philosopher's stone and transmutation into gold. The great Chandra Varma, who was born of the embraces of Chandrama, the Moon god, possessed the power of converting iron into gold. Laliya, a blacksmith of Ahmadâbâd, made an axe for a Bhîl, who returned and complained that it would not cut. Laliya, on looking at it, found that the blade had been turned into gold. On questioning the Bhîl, he ascertained that he had tried to sharpen it on what turned out to be the philosopher's stone. Laliya, by possession of the stone, acquired great wealth, and was finally attacked by the king's troops. At last he was obliged to throw the stone into the Bhadar river, where it still lies, but once some iron chains were let down into the water, and when they touched it the links were converted into gold.[1]

## GOLD AND SILVER PROTECTIVES.

Gold, and in a less degree silver, have a similar protective influence. The idea is apparently based on their scarcity and value, and on their colour—yellow and white being obnoxious to evil spirits. Hence a little bit of gold is put into the mouth of the dying Hindu, and both gold and silver, combined with tigers' claws and similar protectives, are largely used as amulets. These metals are particularly effective in the form of ornaments, many of which are images of the gods, or have some mystic significance, or are made in imitation of some sacred leaf, flower, or animal. This is one main cause of the recklessness with which rich natives load their children with masses of costly jewellery, though they are well aware that the practice often leads to robbery and murder.

## COPPER AND BRASS PROTECTIVES.

Next come copper and brass. The use of copper in the

[1] "Bombay Gazetteer," v. 123; and for another instance, see Jarrett, "Aîn-i-Akbari," ii. 197.

form of rings and amulet cases is very common. Many of the vessels used in the daily service of the gods, such as the Argha, with which the daily oblations are made, are made of this metal. So with brass and various kinds of alloy used for bells, drinking and cooking utensils.

The common brass Lota is always carried about by a man during the period of mourning as a preservative against the evil spirits which surround him until the ghost of the dead man is finally laid. Copper rings are specially worn as an antidote to pimples and boils, while those of iron are supposed to weaken the influence of the planet Sani or Saturn, which is proverbially unlucky and malignant. His Evil Eye, in particular, brings misfortune at intervals of twenty-four years; all offerings to him are black, and consequently ill-omened, such as sesamum, charcoal, buffaloes, and black salt; and only the Dakaut, the lowest class of Brâhman priest, will accept such offerings.[1]

## CORAL AND MARINE PRODUCTS PROTECTIVES.

Next in value to these metals come coral and other marine products, which in the case of the Hindus probably derive their virtue from being strange to an inland-dwelling people, and as connected with the great ocean, the final home of the sainted dead. Coral is particularly valued in the form of a necklace by those who cannot afford the costlier metals, and its ashes are constantly used in various rustic remedies and stimulants. In Gujarât a coral ring is used to keep off the evil influence of the sun,[2] and in Bengal mourners touch it as a form of purification. According to the old belief in England, coral guarded off lightning, whirlwind, tempests and storms from ships and houses, and was hung round the necks of children to assist teething and keep off the falling sickness.[3] So with shells, particularly the Sankha or conch shell, which is used for oblations and is regarded as sacred to Vishnu. It is blown at his temples when the deity

[1] Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 108 sqq.; Wilson, "Indian Caste," ii. 174.

[2] "Campbell, "Notes," 69. [3] Brand, "Observations," 344, 733.

receives his daily meal, in order to wake him and scare off vagrant spirits, who would otherwise consume or defile the offering. This shell, in popular belief, is the bone of the demon Panchajana, who, according to the Vishnu Purâna,[1] "lived in the form of a conch shell under the ocean. Krishna plunged into the water, killed him, took the shell, which constituted his bones, and afterwards used it for a horn. When sounded it fills the demon hosts with dismay, animates the gods, and annihilates unrighteousness."

All these shells appear to derive part of their virtue from the fact that they are perforated. The cowry shell, which is worn round the neck by children as an antidote to the Evil Eye and diabolical influence, is supposed to have such sympathy with the wearer that it cracks when the evil glance falls upon it, as in England coral was thought to change colour and grow pale when its owner was sick. The cowry shell is, with the same object, tied round the neck or pasterns of a valued horse, or on a cow or buffalo. The shell armlet worn by Bengal women has the same protective influence.[2]

## PRECIOUS STONES PROTECTIVES.

Precious stones possess similar value. Sir Thomas Brown would not deny that bezoar was antidotal, but he could not bring himself to believe that "sapphire is preservative against enchantments." In one special combination of nine varieties, known as the Nauratana, they are specially efficacious—the ruby sacred to the sun, the pearl to the moon, coral to Mars, emerald to Mercury, topaz to Jupiter, diamond to Venus, sapphire to Saturn, amethyst to Râhu, and the cat's-eye to Ketu. In the mythology the gods interrupted Pârvatî when she was with Mahâdeva, and nine jewels dropped from her anklet. When he looked at them he saw his image reflected in each of them, and they appeared in the form of the nine Kanyâs or heavenly maidens. The Naulakha or nine lâkh necklace constantly appears in Indian folk-lore.

[1] v. 21.
[2] For further examples see Campbell, "Notes," 126 sqq.

In the story of the Princess Aubergine we read that "inside the fish there is a bumble-bee, inside the bee a tiny box, and inside the box is the wonderful nine lâkh necklace. Put it on and I shall die." And in one of Somadeva's stories, at the marriage, Jaya gives the bride a necklace of such a kind that, as long as it is upon a person's neck, hunger, thirst, and death cannot harm him.[1] It is of jewels that the lamps which light fairy-land are made.

Many of the precious stones have tales and qualities of their own. Once upon a time a holy man came and settled at Panna who had a diamond as large as a cart-wheel. The Râja, hearing of this, tried to take it by force, but the saint hid it in the ground out of his way. He told the Râja that the diamond wheel could not leave his dominions, and that no one could ever find it. The Muhammadans say that all the diamonds found since, in these famous mines, were fragments of the wheel.[2] The wearing of a ring of sapphire, sacred to Sani or Saturn, is supposed to turn out lucky or unlucky, according to circumstances. For this reason, the wearer tries it for three days, that is, he wears it on Saturday, which is sacred to Saturn, and keeps it on till Tuesday. During this time, if no mishap befalls him, he continues to wear it during the period when the planet's influence is unfavourable; but should any mishap befall him during the three days, he gives the ring to a Brâhman.[3] The amethyst obtains its name because any one who wears it cannot be affected by wine. The turquoise or Fîroza is a mystic stone in India. If you bathe wearing a turquoise, the water touched by it protects the wearer from boils, and snakes will not approach him.[4] Shylock got a turquoise from Leah which he would not have given for a wilderness of monkeys, because it changed colour with the health of the owner, and the Turkeys, says an old writer, "doth

[1] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 83; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 478.
[2] Cunningham, "Archæological Reports," vii. 50.
[3] Campbell, "Notes," 119.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 53.

move when there is any peril prepared to him that weareth it."[1] So the onyx, known as the Sulaimâni, or stone of Solomon, has mystic virtues, as, according to Burton, carbuncles and coral, beryl, pearls and rubies were believed to drive away devils, to overcome sorrow, and to stop dreams.[2]

## BEADS PROTECTIVES.

With poorer people beads take the place of gems, and in particular the curious enamelled bead, which probably came from China and is still found in old deserted sites, mostly of Buddhistic origin, enjoys special repute. We have already met with the parturition bead, and in Kolhapur there is a much-valued Arabic stone which, when any woman is in labour, is washed and the water given to her to drink. In Scotland the amber bead cures inflamed eyes and sprains, as in Italy looking through amber beads strengthens the sight.[3] Here the perforation confers a mystical quality. As an antidote to the Evil Eye blue beads are specially valued, and are hung round the necks and pasterns of horses and other valuable animals. The belief in the efficacy of beads is at the basis of the use of rosaries, which, as used in Europe, are almost certainly of Eastern origin, imported in the Middle Ages in imitation of those worn by Buddhistic or Hindu ascetics, who ascribe to them manifold virtue. Such are those of the Tulasî or sacred basil, worn by Vaishnavas, and those of the Rudrâksha, worn by Saivas.

## BLOOD A PROTECTIVE.

Blood is naturally closely connected with life. "The flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Hence blood comes to be a scarer of demons. In Scott's Lay the wizard's book would not open till he smeared the cover with the Borderer's curdled gore. In

[1] "Brand, "Observations," 733. [2] "Anatomy of Melancholy," 434.
[3] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 146; Leland. "Etruscan Roman Remains," 267.

Cornwall, the burning of blood from the body of a dead animal is a very common method of appeasing the spirits of disease,[1] and the blood sacrifices so prevalent all over the world are performed with the same object. A curious Evil Eye charm is recorded from Allahâbâd. A woman of the Chamâr or carrier caste gave birth to a dead child. Thinking that this was due to fascination, she put a piece of the cloth used at her confinement down a well, having previously enclosed in it two leaves of betel, some cloves, and a piece of the castor-oil plant.[2] Here we have, first, a case of well-worship; secondly, the use of betel, cloves, and the castor-oil plant, all scarers of evil spirits; and thirdly, an instance of the use of blood for the same purpose. We have elsewhere noticed the special character attached to menstrual or parturition blood. But blood itself is most effectual against demoniacal influence. There are many cases where blood is rubbed on the body as an antidote to disease. In Bombay some Marhâtas give warmed goat's blood in cases of piles, and in typhus, or red discoloration of the skin with blotches, the patient is cured by killing a cock and rubbing the sick man with the blood. Others use the blood of the great lizard in cases of snake-bite.[3] A bath of the blood of children was once ordered for the Emperor Constantine, and because he, moved by the tears of the parents, refused to take it, his extraordinary humanity was rewarded by a miraculous cure.

Similarly, among the Drâvidians, the Kos drink the blood of the sacrificial bull; the Malers cure demoniacs by giving the blood of a sacrificed buffalo; the Pahariyas, in time of epidemics, set up a pair of posts and a cross beam, and hang on it a vessel of blood.[4] So, the Jews sprinkled the door-posts and the horns of the altar with blood, and the same customs prevail among many other peoples.

We shall meet with instances of the same rite when

[1] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 213.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 67.
[3] Campbell, "Notes," 49 sq.
[4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 115, 270, 272.

dealing with the blood covenant and human sacrifice. On the same analogy many Indian tribes mark the forehead of the bride with blood or vermilion, and red paint is smeared on the image of the village godling in lieu of a regular sacrifice.

## INCENSE.

Similarly, incense is largely used in religious rites, partly to please with the sweet savour the deity which is being worshipped, and partly to drive away demons who would steal or defile the offerings. Bad smells repel evil spirits, and this is probably why assafœtida is given to a woman after her delivery. In Ireland, if a child be sick, they take a piece of the cloth worn by the person supposed to have overlooked the infant and burn it near him. If he sneezes, he expels the spirit and the spell is broken, or the cloth is burned to ashes and given to the patient, while his forehead is rubbed with spittle. In Northern India, if a child be sick, a little bran, pounded chillies, mustard, and sometimes the eyelashes of the child are passed round its head and burned. If the burning mixture does not smell very badly, which it is needless to say is hardly ever the case, it is a sign that the child is still under the evil influence; if the odour be abominable, that the attack has been obviated.[1] Similarly, in Bengal, red mustard seeds and salt are mixed together, waved round the head of the patient, and then thrown into the fire.[2] This reminds us of the flight of the Evil One into the remote parts of Egypt from the smell of the fish liver burnt by Tobit, and an old writer says: "Wyse clerkes knoweth well that dragons hate nothyng more than the stenche of breenynge bones, and therefore they gaderyd as many as they might fynde, and brent them; and so with the stenche thereof they drove away the dragons, and so they were brought out of greete dysease."[3]

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 51.
[2] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 209.
[3] Brand, "Observations," 166.

## SPITTLE.

We have just met with an instance of the use of spittle for the scaring of the disease demon or the Evil Eye. This is a very common form of charm for this purpose. In one of the Italian charms the performer is directed to spit behind himself thrice and not to look back. In another, "if your eyes pain you, you must take the saliva of a woman who has given birth only to boys, not girls. And she must have abstained from sexual union and stimulating food for three days. Then, if her saliva be bright and clear, anoint your eyes with it and they will be cured."[1] At Innisboffin, in Ireland, when the old women meet a baby out with its nurse they spit on the ground all round it to keep fairies from it. In Wicklow they spit on a child for good luck the first day it is brought out after birth.[2] In several of the European folk-tales we find that spittle has the power of speech. The habit of spitting on the handsell or first money taken in the morning is common. It is done "either to render it tenacious that it may remain with them and not vanish away like a fairy gift, or else to render it propitious and lucky, that it may draw more money to it."[3] Muhammad advised that when the demon Khanzab interrupted any one at his prayers, he was to spit over his left shoulder three times.

In India, spittle is regarded as impure. Hence a native cleans his teeth daily with a fresh twig of the Nîm tree, and regards the European's use of the same tooth-brush day after day as one of the numerous extraordinary impurities which we permit. Hence, too, the practice of spitting when any one who is feared or detested passes by. When women see a falling star they spit three times to scare the demon. In Bombay, spittle, especially fasting spittle, is used to rub on wounds as a remedy. It cures inflammation of the eyes, an idea which was familiar to the Jews. It guards children against the Evil Eye. In the Konkan, when a person is affected by the Evil Eye, salt and mustard are waved round

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 260, 279; Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 258 sqq.

[2] "Folk-lore," iv. 358, 361.

[3] Brand, *loc. cit.*, 724.

his head, thrown into the fire, and he is told to spit. In Gujarât, when an orthodox Shiah Musalmân travels with a Sunni, he spits, and among the Roman Catholics of Kanara, at baptism the priest wets his thumb with spittle and with it touches the child's ears and nostrils.[1]

## SALT.

We have seen above that salt is also used in the same way. Salt, apparently from its power of checking decay, is regarded as possessing mystical powers. All over Europe the spilling of salt in the direction of a person was considered ominous. "It was held to indicate that something had already happened to one of the family, or was about to befall the person spilling it, and also to denote the rupture of friendship."[2] The custom of putting a plate of salt on a corpse with the object of driving off evil spirits is common in Great Britain. We have already seen that salt is given to children after they have eaten sweets. Many classes of Hindu ascetics bury their dead in salt. It is waved round the head of the bride and bridegroom, and buried near the house door as a charm. In classical antiquity it was mixed with water and sprinkled on the worshippers.

## SALUTATION.

Another way of dispelling evil spirits is by the various forms of salutation, which generally consist in the invocation of some deity. The Hindu says, "*Râm! Râm!*" when he meets a friend, or *Jay Gopâl!* "Glory to Krishna!" or whoever his personal god may be, and the same idea accounts for many of the customs connected with the reception of guests, who, coming from abroad, may bring evil spirits with them.

## THE SEPARABLE SOUL: WAVING.

Another series of prophylactics depends on the idea of the

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 131; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 439.
[2] Brand, *loc. cit.*, 668.

separable soul or that spirits are always fluttering in the air round a person's head. Hence a long series of customs known as Parachhan, performed at Hindu marriages in Upper India, when lights, a brass tray, grain, and household implements like the rice pounder or grindstone are waved round the head of the married pair as a protective. In Somadeva's tale of Bhunandana we find that he "performs the ceremony of averting evil spirits from all quarters by waving the hand over the head."[1] This is perhaps one explanation of the use of flags at temples and village shrines, though in some cases they appear to be used as a perch, on which the deity sits when he makes his periodical visits. Hence, too, feathers have a mystic significance, though in some cases, as in those of the peacock and jay, the colour is the important part. Hence the waving of the fan and Chaurî over the head of the great man and the use of the umbrella as a symbol of royalty. A woman carrying her child on her return from a strange village, lest she should bring the influence of some foreign evil spirit back with her, will, before entering her own homestead, pass seven little stones seven times round the head of the baby, and throw them in different directions, so as to pass away any evil that may have been contracted. When a sorcerer is called in to attend a case attributed to demoniacal possession, he whisks the patient with a branch of the Nîm, Madâr, or Camel thorn, all of which are more or less sacred trees and have acquired a reputation as preservatives. When this is completed, the aspersion of the afflicted one, be he man or beast, with some water from the blacksmith's shop, in which iron has been repeatedly plunged and has bestowed additional efficacy upon it, usually follows.

## BLACKSMITH, RESPECT FOR.

The respect paid to the trade of the blacksmith is a curious survival from the time of the early handicrafts and the substitution of weapons of iron for those of stone.[2] In

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 198.
[2] Schrader, "Prehistoric Antiquities," 163 sqq.

Scotland the same belief in the virtues of the water of the forge prevails, and in Ireland no one will take anything by stealth from such a place.[1] In St. Patrick's Hymn we have a prayer against "the spells of women, of smiths, and of druids." Culann, the mystic smith, appears in Celtic folk-lore. In all the mythologies the idea is widespread that the art of smithing was first discovered and practised by super-natural personages. We see this through the whole range of folk-lore, from the Cyclopes to Wayland Smith, who finally came to be connected with the Devil of Christianity.[2]

## WATER.

We have already referred to water as a protective against the influence of evil spirits. We see this principle in the rite of ceremonial bathing as a propitiation for sin. It also appears in the use of water which has been blown upon by a holy man as a remedy for spirit possession. Among many menial tribes in the North-Western Provinces with the same object the bride is washed in the water in which the bridegroom has already taken his wedding bath. Again, on a lucky day fixed by the Pandit the rite of Nahâwan or ceremonial bathing is performed for the protection of the young mother and her child two or three days after her confinement. Both of them are bathed in a decoction of the leaves of the Nîm tree. Then a handful of the seeds of mustard and dill are waved round the mother's head and thrown into a vessel containing fire. When the seeds are consumed the cup is upset, and the mother breaks it with her own foot. Next she sits with grain in her hand, while the household brass tray is beaten to scare demons and the midwife throws the child into the air. All this takes place in the open air in the courtyard of the house. Here we have a series of antidotes to demoniacal

[1] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 45; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 205.

[2] "Folk-lore," ii. 292; Rhys, "Lectures," 446, 553; Campbell, "Popular Tales," Introduction, lxx.; ii. 98; Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," i. 37.

possession, the purport of which will be easily understood on principles which have been already explained.

## GRAIN.

With this use of grain we meet with another valuable antidote. We have it in Great Britain in the rule that "the English, when the bride comes from church, are wont to cast wheat upon her head."[1] It survives in our custom of throwing rice over the wedded pair when they start on the honeymoon. On the analogy of other races one object of the rite would seem to be to keep in the soul which is likely to depart at such a crisis in life as marriage. Thus, "in Celebes they think that a bridegroom's soul is apt to fly away at marriage, so coloured rice is scattered over him to induce it to stay. And, in general, at festivals in South Celebes rice is strewed on the head of the person in whose honour the festival is held, with the object of retaining his soul, which at such times is in especial danger of being lured away by envious demons."[2]

This rite appears widely in Indian marriage customs. Among the Mhârs of Khândesh, on the bridegroom approaching the bride's house, a piece of bread is waved round his head and thrown away.[3] In a Kunbi's wedding a ball of rice is waved round the boy's head and thrown away, and at the lucky moment grains of rice are thrown over the couple. Among the Telang Nhâvis of Bijaypur the chief marriage rite is that the priest throws rice over the boy and girl. The grain acquires special efficacy if it be either parched, and thus purified by fire, or if it be stained in some lucky or demon-scaring colour.[4] Thus, in Upper India grain parched with a special rite is thrown over the pair as they revolve round the marriage shed, and this function is, if possible, performed by the brother of the bride. Rice stained yellow with turmeric is very often used for this purpose. Another device is to make a pile of rice, with a

[1] Brand, "Observations," 355.
[2] Frazer, "Golden Bough," i. 125.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," xii. 117.
[4] Campbell, "Notes," 95.

knot of turmeric and a copper coin concealed in it. This at a particular stage of the service the bride knocks down with her foot. The Lodhis of the Dakkhin, in the same way, put a pile of rice at the door of the boy's house, which he upsets with his foot. All through Northern India the exorciser shakes grain in a fan, which is, as we shall see, a potent fetish, and by the number of grains which remain in the interstices calculates which particular ghost is worrying the patient. On the same principle the Orâons put rice in the mouth of the corpse, and the Koiris, when they marry, walk round a pile of water-pots and scatter rice on the ground.[1] The custom of sprinkling grain at marriage appears in many of the folk-tales.

## URAD.

We are familiar in Roman literature with the use of beans at funerals, and at the Lemuria thrice every other night to pacify the ghosts of the dead beans were flung on the fire of the altar to drive the spirits out of the house. The same idea appears in the Carlings or fried peas given away and eaten on the Sunday before Palm Sunday.[2] No special sanctity appears to apply to the pea or bean in India, but they are replaced by the Urad pulse, which is much used in rites of all kind, and especially in magic, when it is thrown over the head of the person whom the magician wishes to bring under his control.[3]

## BARLEY.

Barley, another sacred grain, is rubbed over the corpse of a Hindu and sprinkled on the head before the cremation rite is performed. So, the Orâons throw rice on the urn as they take it to the tomb, and sprinkle grain on the ground behind the bones to keep the spirit from coming back.[4]

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 261, 321.
[2] Brand, "Observations," 58.
[3] Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 289.
[4] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 261.

### SESAMUM.

Til or black sesamum, again, has certain qualities of the same kind. Hence it is used in the funeral rites, and in form of Tilanjali or a handful mixed with water is one of the offerings to the sainted dead, and made up in the form of a cow, called Tiladhenu, it is presented to Brâhmans.

### SHEAVES.

Most grains in the ear have also mystic uses. It is hung up over the house door to repel evil spirits, and in Hoshangâbâd they tie a sheaf of corn on a pole and fasten it to the cattle shed as a preservative.[1] The combination of seven kinds of grain, known as Satnaja, is an ingredient in numerous charms and is used in many forms of worship.

### MILK.

So with the products of the sacred cow, which are, as might have been expected, most valuable for this purpose. Hence the use of Ghilor or clarified butter in the public and domestic ritual. Milk for the same reason is used in offerings and sprinkled on the ground as an oblation. Cowdung, in particular, is regarded as efficacious. After the death or birth impurity the house is carefully plastered with a mixture of cowdung and clay. No cooking place is pure without it, and the corpse is cremated with cakes of cowdung fuel. Even the urine of the cow is valued as a medicine and a purificant. The cow guards the house from evil, and every rich man keeps a cow so that his glance may fall on her when he wakes from sleep, and he regards her as the guardian of the household.

### COLOURS.

Colours, again, are scarers of e il spirits. They particularly dread yellow, black, red, and white. The belief in the efficacy of yellow accounts for the use of turmeric in the

[1] "Settlement Report," 274.

domestic ritual.[1] A few days before the marriage rites commence the bride and bridegroom are anointed with a mixture of oil and turmeric known as Abtan. The bride assumes a robe dyed in turmeric, which she wears until the wedding. The marriage letter of invitation is coloured with turmeric, and splashes of it are made on the wall and worshipped by the married pair. In the old times the woman who performed Satî, and nowadays married women who die, are taken to the pyre wrapped in a shroud dyed with turmeric. The corpse is very often smeared with turmeric before cremation, a custom which is not peculiar to the so-called Aryan Hindus, because it prevails among the Thârus, one of the most primitive tribes of the sub-Himâlayan forests. The same principle probably explains the use of yellow clothes by certain classes of ascetics, and of Chandan or sandal-wood in making caste marks and for various ceremonial purposes.

Yellow and red are the usual colours of marriage garments, and the parting of the bride's hair is stained with vermilion, though here the practice is probably based on the symbolical belief in the Blood Covenant. The same idea is probably the explanation of the flinging of red powder and water coloured with turmeric at the Holî or spring festival.

Black, again, is feared by evil spirits, and the husbandman hangs a black pot in his field to scare spirits and evade the Evil Eye, and young women and children have their eyelids marked with lampblack. In the Mirzapur Baiga's sacrifice the black fowl or the black goat is the favourite victim, and charcoal is valued, some put into the milk as a preservative and some buried under the threshold to guard the household from harm.

## GRASSES.

For the same reason various kinds of grass are considered sacred, such as the Kusa, the Dûrva, the Darbha. Among the Prabhus of Bombay juice of the Dûrva grass is poured into the left nostril of a woman when the pregnancy and coming

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 29.

of age rites are performed, and the Kanaujiya Brâhman husband drops some of the juice down her nose when she reaches maturity.[1] The Sholapur Mângs when they come back from the grave strew some Hariyâli grass and Nîm leaves on the place where the deceased died. The Mûnj grass is also sacred, and a thread made of it is worn at one stage of the Brâhman's life. Some of these sacred grasses form an important ingredient in the Srâddha offerings to the sacred dead, some are used in the marriage and cremation ritual, on some the dying man is laid at the moment of dissolution. They are potent to avert the Evil Eye, and hence the mother of Râma and Lakshmana, when she looks at them, breaks a blade of grass.[2]

## TATTOOING.

Next come special marks made on the body. Such are the marks branded on various parts of their bodies by many classes of ascetics, and the caste marks made in clay or ashes by most high-class Hindus. It has been suggested that many of these marks are of totemistic origin. That this is so among races beyond the Indian border is almost certainly the case.[3] But though tattooing, a widespread practice of the Indian people, very possibly originated in totemism, still, as far as has hitherto been ascertained, no distinct trace remains of a tribal tattoo, and it is safer at present to class marks of this kind in the general category of devices to repel evil spirits. Among purely sectarial marks we have the forehead mark of the Saivas, composed of three curved lines like a half-moon, to which is added a round mark on the nose; it is made with the clay of the Ganges, or with sandal-wood, or the ashes of cowdung, the ashes being supposed to represent the disintegrating force of the deity. The mark of the Vaishnavas is in the form of the foot of Vishnu, and consists of two lines rather oval drawn the whole length of the nose and carried forward in

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 92. [2] Growse, "Râmâyana," 99.
[3] Frazer, "Totemism," 26 sq.

straight lines across the forehead. It is generally made with the clay of the Ganges, sometimes with the powder of sandal-wood. The Sâkta forehead mark is a small semi-circular line between the eyebrows, with a dot in the middle.

The practice of tattooing is common both among the Aryan and Drâvidian races, but is more general among the lower than the higher castes. Thus, the Juâng women tattoo themselves with three strokes on the forehead just over the nose, and three on each of the temples. They attach no meaning to the marks, have no ceremony in adopting them, and are ignorant of the origin of the practice. The Khariya women make three parallel marks on the forehead, the outer lines terminating at the ends in a crook, and two on each temple. The Ho women tattoo themselves in the form of an arrow, which they regard as their national emblem. The Birhor women tattoo their chests, arms, and ankles, but not their faces. The Orâon women have three marks on the brow and two on each temple. The young men burn marks on their fore-arms as part of the ordeal ceremony; girls, when adult, or nearly so, have themselves tattooed on the arms and back. The Kisân women have no such marks; if a female of the tribe indulges herself in the vanity of having herself tattooed, she is at once turned adrift as having degraded herself. Here we may have some faint indications of a tribal tattoo, but among most of the tribes which practise the custom it has become purely protective or ornamental.[1]

Among the Drâvidian tribes of the North-Western Provinces tattooing generally prevails. The Korwas and many other of these tribes get their women tattooed by a woman of the Bâdi sub-division of Nats. They are tattooed only on the breast and arms, not on the thighs. There are no ceremonies connected with it, nor any special pattern. Any girl gets herself tattooed in any figure she approves for a small sum. Well-to-do women always get it done; but if a woman is not tatooed, it is not considered unlucky. The

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 157, 161, 191, 219, 251.

men of the tribe are not tattooed. The Ghasiya women tattoo themselves on the breasts, arms, thighs, and feet. They say that when a woman dies who is not tattooed, the Great Lord Parameswar is displeased and turns her out of heaven, or has her branded with the thorn of the acacia. In the same way among the Chamârs, when a woman who has not been tattooed dies, Parameswar asks her where are the marks and signs which she ought to possess to show that she had lived in the world. If she cannot show them, she will in her next birth be re-born as a Bhûtnî, Pretnî, or Râkshasî.

At present among low-caste women the process of tattooing is regarded as a species of initiation, and usually marks the attainment of puberty. It thus corresponds with the rite of ear-piercing among males. To the east of the North-West Provinces a girl is not allowed to cook until she is tattooed with a mark representing the Sîtâ kî Rasoî or cook-house of Sîtâ, and in Bengal high-caste people will not drink from the hands of a girl who does not wear the Ullikhî or star-shaped tattoo mark between her eyebrows. A Chamâr woman who is not tattooed at marriage will not, it is believed, see her father and mother in the next world. This reminds us of the idea prevalent in Fiji, that women who are not tattooed are liable to special punishment in the land of the dead.[1] In Bombay the custom has been provided with a Brâhmanical legend. One day Lakshmî, the wife of Vishnu, told her husband that whenever he went out on business or to visit his devotees she became frightened. Hearing this, Vishnu took his weapons and stamped them on her body, saying that the marks of his weapons would save her from evil.

Hence women in Bombay tattoo themselves with the figures of the lotus, conch shell, and discus, and from this the present custom is said to have originated.[2]

In Upper India the forms of the tattoo marks fall into

[1] Bholanâth Chandra, "Travels of a Hindu," i. 326; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 27, 99; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 125.
[2] Campbell, "Notes," p. 134.

various classes. Some are rude or conventionalized representations of animals, plants, and flowers. The operators carry round with them sketches of the different kinds of ornament, and the girl selects these according to taste. The peacock, the horse, the serpent, the scorpion, tortoise, centipede, appear constantly in various forms. Others, again, are representations of jewellery actually worn—necklaces, bracelets, armlets, or rings. Others, again, are purely religious, such as the trident or matted hair of Siva, the weapons of Vishnu, and the cooking house of Sîtâ, the type of wifely virtue. Some of these marks were probably of totemistic origin, but they have now become merely ornamentative, as was the case in Central Asia in the time of Marco Polo, where they were regarded only as "a piece of elegance or a sign of gentility," and among the Thracians, as described by Herodotus.[1] It may be noticed that in the time of Marco Polo people used to go from Upper India to Zayton in China to be tattooed.[2] These animal forms of tattooing are found also among the Drâvidian tribes of the Central Provinces, where the forms used are a peacock, an antelope, or a dagger, and the marks are made on the back of the thighs and legs. In Bengal tattooing is used as a cure for goitre.[3]

We may close this long catalogue of devices intended to scare spirits, with a number of miscellaneous examples.

It seems to be a well-established principle that evil spirits fear leather. On this is perhaps based the idea of the shoe being a mode of repelling the Evil Eye and the influence of demons. We find this constantly appearing in the folk-lore of the West. Thus, the Highlanders paid particular attention to the leaving of the bridegroom's left shoe without buckle or latchet, to prevent the secret influences of witches on the wedding night.[4] And Hudibras tells how—

[1] Yule, "Marco Polo," ii. 69, 99; Herodotus, v. 6; and for the Dacians, Pliny, "Natural History," vii. 10; xxii. 2.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, ii. 218.

[3] Hislop, "Papers," ii., note; Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 292.

[4] Brand, "Observations," 399. For the Indian versions of Cinderella and her shoe, see "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 102, 121.

Augustus having by oversight
Put on his left shoe 'fore his right,
Had like to have been slain that day
By soldiers mutinying for pay."

Maidens in Europe ascertain whether they will be married and who will be their future husbands by throwing the slipper at the new year. The throwing of old shoes at an English wedding seems on the same principle to be based on the idea of scaring the demon of barrenness. According to Mr. Hartland,[1] the gipsies of Transylvania throw old shoes and boots on a newly married pair when they enter their tent, expressly to enhance the fertility of the union.

In the same way in India, people who are too poor to afford another protective place on the top of their houses a shoe heel upwards. This seems to give some additional efficacy to the charm, because we find the same rule in force elsewhere. Thus, in Cornwall, a slipper with the point turned up placed near the bed cures cramp.[2] In Pûira, if a man feels that he has been struck by an incantation, he at once takes hold of an upturned shoe.[3]

The fear which spirits feel for leather is also illustrated by the procedure of the Drâvidian Baiga, who flagellates people suffering from demoniacal possession with a tawse or leathern strap. In the Dakkhin a person troubled with nightmare sleeps with a shoe under his pillow, and an exorcist frightens evil spirits by threatening to make them drink water from a tanner's well. We shall see that this is one way of punishing and repelling the power of witches. The Pûna Kunbis believe that a drink of water from a tanner's hand destroys the power of a witch. In the Panjâb, if a man sits on a currier's stone, he gets boils.[4] The same principle probably accounts for much of the fear or contempt generally felt in India regarding shoe-beating as a form of punishment. At the same time it is said in Persia and Arabia that the dread of a flagellation with the slipper is

[1] "Legend of Perseus," i. 171.
[2] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 409. [3] Campbell, "Notes," 105.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 86.

based on the idea that while a flogging with the regular scourge involves little discredit, a beating with anything not originally intended for the purpose, such as a shoe or knotted cloth, is disgraceful.

The same feeling for the power of leather possibly explains the use as a seat of various kinds of skins, such as those of the tiger and antelope, by many kinds of ascetics, and in the old ritual the wife with her husband sat on the hide of a bull to promote the fertility of their union.

## GARLIC.

Garlic, again, from its pungency, is valued in the same way. Garlic was one of the substances used by Danish mothers to keep evil from children.[1] The Swedish bridegroom sews in his clothes garlic, cloves, and rosemary. Garlic was an early English cure for a fiend-struck patient.[2] Juvenal said that the Egyptians had gods growing in their gardens, in allusion to their reverence for onions or garlic. In Sanskrit garlic is called Mlechha-kanda, "the foreigner's root," and its virtues for the removal of demons are so well known that it will be often seen hung from the lintel of the house door. The same idea may account for the very common prejudice among some castes against eating onions.

## GLASS.

Glass in the form of beads, which seem to derive some of their efficacy from being perforated, is also very useful in this way. Mirrors from time immemorial have been held to possess the same quality. "Fascinators, like basilisks, had their own terrible glance turned against them if they saw themselves reflected," "*Si on luy presente un miror, par endardement reciproque, ces rayons retournent sur l' autheur d' iceux.*" Philostratus declares that if a mirror be held before a sleeping man during a hail or thunder-storm, the storm will cease.[3] Hence women in India wear mirrors in

[1] Brand, "Observations," 335.
[2] Campbell, "Notes," 91, quoting Chambers, "Book of Days," 720.
[3] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains." 93.

their thumb rings, and the Jâtnî covers her sheet with little pieces of shining glass.

Pieces of horn, especially that which is said to come from the jackal, and that of the antelope, are also efficacious. The bâzâr Banya treasures up the gaudy labels from his cloth bales for the same purpose. Garlands of flowers possess the same quality, and so do various fruits, such as dates, cocoanuts, betel-nuts, and plantains, which are placed in the lap of the bride or pregnant woman to scare the evil spirits which cause barrenness, and sugar is distributed at marriages. The bones of the camel are very useful for driving off insects from a sugar-cane field, and buried under the threshold keep ghosts out of the house. Pliny says that a bracelet of camel's hair keeps off fever.[1]

Lastly, the demon may be trapped by physical means. "To be delivered from witches they hang in their entries whitethorn gathered on May Day."[2] So, many of the menial castes in the North-West Provinces keep a net and some thorns in the delivery room to scare evil spirits.

There are certain persons who are naturally protected from the Evil Eye and demoniacal agency, or who have control over evil spirits. Such is a man born by the foot presentation, who can cure rheumatism and various other diseases by merely rubbing the part affected. Men with double thumbs are considered safe against the Evil Eye, and so is a bald man, apparently because no one thinks it worth his while to envy such people. According to English belief, children born after midnight have power all through their lives of seeing the spirits of the departed. In India, people who are born within the period of the Salono festival in August are not only protected from, but possess the power of casting, the Evil Eye. The same is the case of those who have accidentally eaten ordure in childhood. We have already noticed the mystic power of cowdung. Dung generally is

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iv. 132; Campbell, 'Notes," 284.
[2] Brand, "Observations," 121.

offensive to spirits. It was believed in Europe that horse-dung placed before the house or behind the door brought good luck.[1] Women who eat dung possess, as we shall see, the power of witchcraft.

A man with only one eye is dreaded because he is naturally envious of those with good sight, and he is proverbially a scoundrel. The giant with one eye is familiar in folk-lore, and he is generally vicious and malignant. We have the black man of Celtic folk-lore who has only one eye and one leg.[2] In the Irish tales Crinnaur, like the Cyclopes, has only one eye. Sindbad in his third voyage encounters a monster of the same kind. Laplanders have a one-eyed giant Stalo, and in one of the modern versions of the Perseus myth there are two hags who have only a single eye between them. The same idea appears in Indian folk-lore. The planet Sukra is said to have only one eye. Such was also the case with the monster Kabandha, who was killed by Râma, and Arâyî, the female fiend of the Veda. The one-eyed devil appears in one of the Kashmîr tales.[3]

### GONDS: PROCEDURE IN CASES OF FASCINATION.

The Gonds have a special procedure in cases of deaths which they believe to have occurred through fascination. The burning of the body is postponed till it is made to point out the delinquent. The relations solemnly call upon the corpse to do this, and the theory is that if there has been foul play of any kind, the body on being taken up, will force the bearers to convey it to the house of the person by whom the spell was cast. If this be three times repeated, the owner of the house is condemned, his property is destroyed, and he is expelled from the neighbourhood.[4]

### AMULETS.

In ordinary cases most people find it advisable to carry an

[1] Brand, "Observations," 598.
[2] Rhys, "Lectures." 348; Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 489; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 429; Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," i. 12.
[3] Knowles, "Folk-lore of Kashmîr," 333.
[4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 283.

amulet of some kind as a preservative. An amulet is primarily a portion of a dead man or animal, by which hostile spirits are coerced or their good offices secured.[1] The amulet, then, in its original sense, is supposed to concentrate in itself the virtues and powers of the man or animal of which it formed a part. Hence the claws of the tiger, which represent in themselves the innate strength and bravery of the animal, are greatly esteemed for this purpose, and the sportsman, when he shoots a tiger, has to count over the claws carefully to the coolies in charge of the dead animal, or they will certainly misappropriate them. In the same way a portion of the umbilical cord is placed among the clothes of the mother and infant to avert the Evil Eye and scare the demons which are then particularly active.

Mr. Ferguson may be correct in his opinion that in India, prior to the distribution of the remains of the Buddha at Kusinagara, we have no historical record of the worship of relics;[2] still the idea must have prevailed widely among the Hindu races, out of whom the votaries of the new faith were recruited. With some of these relics of the Buddha, such as his begging bowl, which was long kept in a Dagoba or Vihâra erected by King Kanishka, then removed for a time to Benares, and finally to Kandahâr, where it is now held in the highest respect by Musalmâns, and has accumulated round it a cycle of legends like those connected with the Sangrail, we reach the zone of pure fetishism.

Another form of amulet is a piece of metal, stone, bone, or similar substance worn on the person, with an invocation inscribed on it to some special god. These are very commonly used among Muhammadans. By Hindus the "Yantras or mystic diagrams are thought to be quite as effective in their operation as the Mantras or spells, and, of course, a combination of the two is held to be absolutely irresistible. An enemy may be killed or removed to some other place, or a whole army destroyed, or salvation and

[1] Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 254, note, 301.
[2] "History of Indian Architecture," 57 sqq.; Cunringham, "Archæological Reports." ii. 87; xvi. 8 sqq.

supreme felicity obtained by drawing a six-sided or eight-sided diagram and writing a particular Mantra underneath. If this be done with the blood of an animal killed sacrificially in a Smasâna or place where corpses are burned, no power in earth or heaven can resist the terrific potency of the charm."[1] On the same principle Hindus head their letters with the words *Srî Râmjî!* "the great god, Râma," or the figures 74, of which one not very probable explanation is that they represent the weight in maunds of the gold ornaments taken from the Râjput dead at the famous siege of Chithor.

The equilateral triangle is another favourite mystic sign. According to the Christian ideas, the figure of three triangles intersected and containing five lines, is called the pentangle of Solomon, and when it is delineated on the body of a man, it marks the five places in which our Saviour was wounded; it was, therefore, regarded as a *fuga demonum*, or a means of frightening demons.[2] Similarly in Northern India, the equilateral triangle is regarded as a mystic sign, and the little broadcloth bags hung round the necks of children to avert the Evil Eye are made in this shape. The diamond shape is also approved because it contains two equilatera triangles base to base.

Another form of mystic sign is the mark of the spread hand with the fingers extended. This is made by the women of the family on the outer wall and round the door-post, and is considered to be particularly efficacious. Mr. Campbell suggests that the custom is based on the belief in the hand being a spirit entry.[3] Natives will tell you that it is because the number five, that of the fingers, is lucky. However this may be, the custom is very generally prevalent. The Bloody Hand of Ulster, worn as a crest by the Baronets of one creation, is well known.[4] The Uchlas of Pûna strew sand on the spot where the dead man breathed his last. They cover the spot with a basket, which they raise next morning

[1] Monier-Williams, "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 203.
[2] Aubrey, "Remaines," 57.
[3] [illegible]otes," 177.
[4] Westropp, "Primitive Symbolism," 58 sqq., 61 [illegible]

in the hope of finding the mark of a palm, which shows that the dead is pleased and brings vigour on the family; and the Thâkurs on the fifth day after the birth of a child dip a hand in red powder and water and make a mark on the wall of the lying-in room, which they worship.[1] At the rock-cut temple of Tilok Sendur in Hoshangâbâd, an annual festival is held, and those who come to demand any special benefit, such as health or children, mark their vow by staining their hand dipped in red paint against the rock wall, fingers upward. If the prayer be heard, they revisit the place and make the same mark, this time with the fingers downward; but whether Mahâdeva is not gracious to his votaries, or whether it is that the sense of favours to come is not keen enough after the prayer of the moment has been granted, the hand-stamps pointing downwards are not a tenth in number of those pointing upwards.[2] The stamping of the hand and five fingers immersed in a solution of sandal-wood has always been regarded as a peculiarly solemn mode of attesting an important document, and it is said that Muhammad himself adopted this practice.[3]

There are numerous varieties of these protective amulets. One purpose which they serve is the procuring of offspring. Children naturally require special protection. Thus, the Mirzapur Korwas tie on the necks of their children roots of various jungle plants, such as the Siyâr Singhî, which owes its name and repute to its resemblance to the so-called horn of the jackal. In cases of disease the Kharwârs wear leaves of the Bel, a sacred tree, cloves and flowers selected by a Brâhman. In the Konkan, in order that a child may not suffer from the Evil Eye, a necklace of marking nuts is put round its neck. The Gûjars of Hazâra hang the berries of the Batkar tree (*Celtis caucasia*) round the necks of men and animals to protect them from the Evil Eye.[5] The pious Musalmân [illegible] scribes on his amulet the five verses known as

[1] "Bombay Gazetteer," xviii. 473, 426.
[2] "Settlement Report," 59 sqq.
[3] Tod, "Annals," i. 383, note, 411, note.
[5] Campbell, "Notes," 251.
"Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 44.

Ayâtu-l-Hifz or "verses of protection," or he makes a magic square with the letters making up the word Hâfiz, "the protector." Many village Musalmâns use little stone or glass tablets for the same purpose. Some have a hocus-pocus inscription purporting to be a verse of the Qurân in Arabic; others have the name of Fâtima coupled with that of the famous martyrs Hasan and Husain. Another amulet of a very elaborate character is described as containing a piece of the umbilical cord encased in metal, a tiger's claw, two claws of the large horned owl turned in opposite directions, and encased in metal, a stone known as the Athrâhâ kâ mankâ, because it has the property of turning eight colours according to the light in which it is placed (probably a tourmaline or quartzose pebble), and a special Evil Eye destroyer in the shape of a jasper or marble bead. These five articles are necessaries, but as an extra precaution the amulet contained some crude gold, a whorled shell, an ancient copper coin, some ashes from the fire of a Jogi ascetic, and the five ingredients of the sacred incense. The owner admitted that it would have been improved had it also contained a magic square.[1] This reminds us of the necklace of amber beads hung round the neck of Scotch children to keep off ill-luck, and the Irish scapular, a piece of cloth on which the name of the Virgin Mary is written on one side, and I.H.S. on the other, which are preservatives against evil spirits. In old times in England such charms were called Characts, and one found with a criminal contained an invocation to the three holy kings, Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar.[2]

One of the most valuable of these protectives is the magic circle, which appears in various forms through the whole range of folk-lore. The idea is that no evil spirit can cross the sacred line. Thus, in Mirzapur they make a circle of grain round the circular pile of corn on the threshing-floor to guard it from evil. Among some castes the circle round

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 186.
[2] "Folk-lore," ii. 75; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 110; Brand, "Observations," 754.

which the bride and bridegroom revolve at marriage is guarded by a circular line of string hung on the necks of a number of water-pots surrounding it. We have seen how the Baiga perambulates his village and drops a line of spirits round the boundary to repel foreign ghosts. This accounts for the stone circles which are found both in Europe and in India, and in Ireland are considered to be the resort of the fairies.[1]

We have constant references to the same custom in the folk-tales. Lakshmana, in the Râmâyana, draws such a circle round Sîtâ when he is obliged to leave her alone. We have many references to the circle within which the ascetic or magician sits when he is performing his sorceries. Thus, in the story of Nischayadatta, the ascetics "quickly made a great circle with ashes, and entering into it, they lighted a fire with fuel, and all remained there muttering a charm to protect themselves." In the tales of the Vetâla, we find the mendicant under a banyan tree engaged in making a circle, and Ksantisila makes a circle of the yellow powder of bones, the ground within which was smeared with blood, and which had pitchers of blood placed in the direction of the cardinal points.[2]

The same idea appears in the magic circle used as an ordeal, or to compel payment of a debt. Thus, we read in Marco Polo:[3] "If a debtor have been several times asked by his creditor for payment and shall have put him off day by day with promises, then if the creditor once meet the debtor and succeed in drawing a circle round him, the latter must not pass out of this circle until he shall have satisfied the claim, or given security for its discharge. If he in any other case presume to pass the circle, he is punished with death, as a transgressor against right and justice." In Northern India this circle is known as a Gururu or Gaurua, and a person who takes an oath stands within it, or takes from inside an article which he claims. In one form of this ceremony the circle is made on the ground with calf's dung

[1] Lady Wilde, *loc. cit.*, 79.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 337; ii. 233, 358. [3] ii. 279.

by an unmarried girl, and in the centre is placed a vessel of water. If money is in dispute, the amount claimed is placed in the water vessel by the defendant. The narrator tells a story to prove the efficacy of the rite :—

"My father owed a Kalwâr one rupee and the Kalwâr claimed five. The matter was brought before the tribal council, and the Kalwâr swore to the five rupees upon the Gaurua. Within an hour his boy, while playing behind the house, was carried off by a wolf. He was rescued, but he was under the curse of the Gaurua, and shortly after he put his finger into a rat hole, was bitten by a snake, and died within the hour." [1]

## THE RING, BRACELET, AND KNOTTED CORD.

From the same principle arises the belief in the magic virtue of the ring, the bracelet, and the knotted cord.

To begin with rings—we have in Plato the story of Gyges, who by means of the ring of invisibility introduced himself to the wife of Candaules, King of Lycia, murdered the latter and got possession of his kingdom. This is like the cloak or cap which appears so constantly in folk-lore. In the Indian tales invisibility is generally obtained by means of a magic ointment, to which there are many parallels in Western stories. We find also the magic ring, which, like that of Ala-ud-dîn, when touched procures the presence and aid of the demons. A woman's nose-ring in India has special respect paid to it, and for a stranger even to mention it is a breach of delicacy.[2] It is the symbol of married happiness, and is removed when the wearer becomes a widow. Among Muhammadans, Shiah women remove their nose-rings during the Muharram as a sign of mourning. There was an old habit in England of marrying by the rush ring, "but it was chiefly practised by designing men, for the purpose of debauching their mistresses, who sometimes were so infatuated as to believe that this mock

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 61.
[2] Tod, "Annals," i. 457; "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 169.

ceremony was a real marriage.[1] In the same way in India a ring of Kusa grass is put on the finger during the most sacred rites and at marriage. The custom appears in the folk-tales. The ring represents an imperishable bond between the giver and the receiver, and is a symbol of the original blood covenant, which is an important element in the belief of all primitive people.[2]

The idea of the magic ring constantly appears in folk-lore. Thus, we have the ring placed in a sacred square and sprinkled with butter-milk, which immediately gives whatever the owner demands. In one of the Kashmîr tales the merchant's son speaks to the magic ring, and immediately a beautiful house and a lovely woman with golden hair appeared.[3] So, in the tales of Somadeva, Sridatta places a ring on the finger of the unconscious princess and she immediately revives; the disloyal wife here, as in the "Arabian Nights," takes a ring from each of her lovers as a token.[4]

The same idea attaches to the bracelet, which is in close connection with the soul of the wearer. Such is the Chandanhâr or sandal-wood necklace of Chandan Râja, and Sodewa Bâî is born with a golden necklace round her neck, concerning which her parents consulted the astrologers. They announced, "This is no common child; the necklace of gold about your daughter's neck contains your daughter's soul. Let it, therefore, be guarded with the utmost care; for if it were taken off and worn by another person, she would die."[5] The same idea appears in the Kashmîr tales, where Panj Phûl refuses to give up her necklace, as "it contains the secret of her life, and was a charm to her against all dangers, sickness and trials; deprived of it she might become sick and miserable, or be taken away from

[1] Brand, "Observations," 359.
[2] Trumbull, "Blood Covenant," 65; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 25; Tylor, "Early History," 128 sq.; Jones, "Finger-ring Lore," 91 sqq.
[3] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 23.
[4] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 61; ii. 80; Lane, "Arabian Nights," i. 9.
[5] Miss Frere, "Old Deccan Days," 230, 236.

them and die."[1] All this is based on the conception of the external soul, to which reference has been already made. The Mâls of Bîrbhûm exchange necklaces at marriages, and the Princess Kalingasenâ wears a bracelet and necklace of lotus fibre to secure relief from the pains of love.[2]

The same idea shows itself in the use of strings and knots. In Northern India a piece of bat's bone is tied round the ankle as a remedy for rheumatism, and answers to the eel-skin, which is used for the same purpose in Europe.[3] In the Shetland Islands, to cure a sprain, a thread of black wool with nine knots is tied on the injured place with a metrical spell.[4] An Italian charm says: "Take from a live hare the ankle bone, remove the hair from his belly, from the hair make a thread, and with it tie the bone to the body of the sufferer, and you will see a wonderful cure."[5] In Ireland a strand of black wool is tied round the ankle, and a charm is recited to cure a sprain; a red string is tied round a child's neck in chincough and epilepsy.[6] In Hoshangâbâd a thread is tied round the ankle as a remedy in fever. If possible, a bit of Ashtara root should be fastened in the knot, and before tying it an oblation of butter is burnt before it.[7] Similarly, a peacock's feather tied on the ankle cures a wound. In the Panjâb, it is a charm against snake-bite to smoke one of the tail feathers of the peacock in a tobacco pipe.[8] The Râjput father binds round the arm of his new-born infant a root of that species of grass known as the Amardûb or "imperishable" Dûb, well known for its nutritive qualities and luxuriant vegetation, in the same way as Scotch women wear round their necks blue woollen threads or small cords till they wean their children.[9] We

[1] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 467.
[2] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 49; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 300.
[3] Henderson, "Folk-lore of Northern Counties," 155; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 145.
[4] "Notes and Queries." i. ser. iv. 500.
[5] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 259.
[6] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 195. 197, 199.
[7] "Settlement Report," 278, 286.
[8] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 15.
[9] Tod, "Annals," i. 415; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 20.

have already noticed the efficacy of various grasses as spirit scarers.

Lastly, the cord itself has powers in folk-lore, and we meet with the magic cord, which, tied round the neck of the hero by a witch, makes him turn into a ram or an ape.[1]

The belief in the efficacy of the magic circle accounts for a variety of other customs. Thus, in a family sacrifice among the Chakmas of Bengal, round the whole sacrificial platform had been run, from the house mother's distaff, a long white thread which encircled the altar, and then carried into the house, was held at the two ends by the good man's wife. Among the Hâris, at marriages, the right hand little finger of the bridegroom's sister's husband is pierced, and a few drops of blood allowed to fall on threads of jute, which are rolled up in a tiny pellet. This the bridegroom holds in his hand, while the bride attempts to snatch it from him. Her success in the attempt is considered to be a good omen of the happiness of the marriage.[2] Here we have a survival of descent in the female line, the blood covenant, and the magic influence of the cord all combined.

Connected with this is the belief in the forming a connection by knotting the magic string. We have the European true love-knot, an emblem of fidelity between the pair betrothed. So in Italy interlaced serpents and all kinds of interweaving, braiding, and interlacing cords are valuable as protectives because they attract the eyes of witches.[3] Thus, among the Kârans of Bengal, the essential part of the marriage ceremony is believed to be the laying of the bride's right hand in that of the bridegroom, and binding their two hands together with a piece of string spun in a special way.[4] This belief in the mystic power of knots is common in all folk-lore.[5] The clothes of the bride and bridegroom

[1] Knowles, "Folk-tales of Kashmîr," 71; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 340.
[2] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 173, 315.
[3] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 168.
[4] Risley, *loc. cit.*, i. 425.
[5] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 576, quoting Lenormant, "Chaldean Magic and Sorcery," 141; Ralston, "Songs of the Russian People," 288.

in Upper India are knotted together as they revolve round the sacred fire. A similar belief explains the wearing of the Janeû or sacred thread by high-caste Hindus. The knots on it, known as Brahma-granthi, or "the knots of the Creator," repel evil influences, and Muhammadans on their birthdays tie knots in a cord, which is known as the Sâlgirah or "year knot."

### FACE-COVERING.

Another device to avoid fascination or other dangerous influence is to cover the face so as to prevent the evil glance reaching the victim for whom it is intended. Thus, at widow marriages in Northern India, the bride and bridegroom are covered with a sheet during the rite, probably in order to avert the envious or malignant influence of the spirit of the woman's first husband. It is in secret that the bridegroom marks the parting of the bride's hair with vermilion. So in Bombay,[1] the Chitpâwan bride in one part of the wedding service has her head covered with a piece of broadcloth. The Ramoshis tie the ends of the bride's and bridegroom's robes to a cloth which four men of the family hold over them. The Dhors of Pûna put a face-cloth on the dead, which is a general practice all over the world. The same belief is almost certainly at the root of much of the customs of Pardah and the seclusion of women. It is as much through fear of fascination as modesty that women draw their sheet across the face when they meet a stranger in the streets. We come across the same feeling in the rule by which all doors were closed when the princess in the "Arabian Nights" went to the bath, and when not long ago the Mikado of Japan and other Eastern potentates took their walks abroad. We thus reach by another route the cycle of Godiva legends.[2]

### OMENS.

Closely connected with the class of ideas which we have

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 60.
[2] Harland, "Science of Fairy Tales," 79 sqq.

been discussing is the belief in omens. This constitutes a very important branch of folk-lore both in the West and in the East. The success of a journey or enterprise is believed in a great measure to depend on the object which was first seen in the morning, or observed on the road at an early period of the march. Thus, according to Theophrastus, "The superstitious man, if a weasel run across his path, will not pursue his walk until some one else has traversed the road, or until he has thrown three stones across it." And Sir Thomas Brown writes: "If an hare cross the highway, there are few above threescore years that are not perplexed thereat, which, notwithstanding, is but an augurial terror according to that received expression, *Inauspicatum dat iter oblatus lepus*. And the ground of the conceit was probably no greater than this, that a fearful animal passing by us portended unto us something to be feared; as upon the like consideration, the meeting of a fox presaged some future imposture."

Tulasi Dâs, in his Râmâyana, sums up the favourable omens:—

"On the left-hand side a blue-necked jay was picking up food, as if to announce the very highest good fortune; on a fair field on the right were a crow and a mungoose in the sight of all; a woman was seen with a pitcher and a child; a fox showed himself winding about; and in front a cow was suckling its calf; a herd of deer came out on the right; a Brâhmanî kite promised all success; also a Syâma bird perched on a tree to the left; a man was met bearing curds, and two learned Brâhmans with books in their hands."[1]

The face of a Teli or oilman, perhaps from the dirt which accompanies his business, is about the worst which can be seen in the early morning; but, with the curious inconsistency which crops up everywhere in phases of similar belief, that of a sweeper is lucky. His face should be always looked at first, but on meeting a Brâhman, the glance should start from his feet.

[1] Growse, 146.

The Thags, like all criminal tribes of the present day, were great believers in what Dr. Tylor calls Angang or meeting omens.[1] With them, if a wolf crossed the path from right to left it was considered a bad omen; if from right to left the import was uncertain. The call of the wolf was considered ominous; if heard during the day, the gang had immediately to leave the neighbourhood. The same idea attached to a crow sitting silent on a tree, which is curiously in contradistinction to the Roman belief—*Saepe sinistra cavâ praedixit ab ilice cornix.* It was also considered very unlucky if a member of the gang had his turban knocked off by accidentally touching a branch.

The jungle tribes have a strong belief in such omens. The Korwas of Mirzapur abandon a journey if a jackal cross the road from the left, or if a little bird, known as the Suiya or small parrot, calls in the same direction. The Patâris and Majhwârs return if the Nîlgâê cross the road from the right.

All natives have more or less the same feeling, and scientific treatises have been written on the subject. Mentioning a monkey in the morning brings starvation for the rest of the day; though looking on its face is considered lucky. Hence monkeys are commonly tied in stables to protect horses, and an old adage says that "the evil of the stable is on the monkey's head." So, in Morocco the wealthy Moors keep a wild boar in their stables, in order that the Jinn and evil spirits may be diverted from the horses and enter into the boar.[2] For the same reason an English groom is fond of keeping a cat near his horses.

If a dog flaps its ears and shakes its head while any business is going on, disaster is sure to follow, and people careful in such matters will stop the work if they can. The baying of a dog indicates death and misfortune, an idea common in British folk-lore.[3]

> The time when screech-owls cry and lean dogs howl,
> And spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves.

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1 "Primitive Culture," i. 120.

2 Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 151.

3 Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 48; Lad Wilde, "Legends," 146 sqq.

Even the little house lizard is, like his kinsfolk, the "murdering basilisks, their softest touch as smart as lizard's stings," considered by the Bengâlis very unlucky, and when they hear its twittering they postpone a journey.[1]

The hare is always a bad omen. He is a god among the Kalmucs, who call him Sakya Muni, or the Buddha, and say that on earth he allowed himself to be eaten by a starving man, for which gracious act he was raised to domineer over the moon, where they profess to see him. There are traces of the same idea in Upper India.[2] The sites of many cities are said to have been founded where a hare crossed the path of the first settler. The hare is detested by the agricultural and fishing population of the Hebrides, and it is one of the ordinary disguises of the witch in European folk-lore.[3]

Black is, of course, unlucky, and if a man, when digging the foundations of a new house, turns up a piece of charcoal, it is advisable to change the site.

Owls are naturally of evil omen. Even the stout-hearted Zâlim Sinh, the famous regent of Kota, abandoned his house because an owl hooted on the roof.[4] The hooting of the owl is a sign that the bird means to leave the place, and wise people would do well to follow his example. One kind of owl, the Raghui Chiraiya, learns people's names, and if any one by chance answer his call he is sure to die.

To see a Dhobi, or washerman, who is associated with foul raiment, is exceedingly dangerous. I once had a bearer who was sadly afflicted because on tour he had to sleep in the same tent with a Dhobi. The old man was constantly bruising his shins over the ropes and pegs, because he was in the habit of stumbling out before dawn with his hands

[1] Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Govinda Sâmanta," i. 12.

[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 66. It has been suggested that the idea arose from the Sanskrit word *sasin*, meaning "hare-marked" or "the moon"; but this seems rather putting the cart before the horse. Conway, "Demonology," i. 125; Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 8; Aubrey, "Remaines," 20, 109

[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," vi. 126; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 128; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 179.

[4] Tod, "Annals," ii. 577 sq.

pressed over his eyes to protect himself from the sight of his ill-omened companion.

A one-eyed man is, as we have already said, very unlucky. When Jaswant Râo Holkar lost one of his eyes, he said, "I was before bad enough; but now I shall be the Guru. or preceptor, of rogues."[1] I once had an office clerk afflicted in this way, and his colleagues refused to sit in the same room with him, because their accounts always went wrong when he looked in their direction. When it was impossible to provide any other accommodation for him, they insisted that he should cover the obnoxious organ with a handkerchief when he had to work in their neighbourhood.

One of the last of the Anglo-Indians, who had become thoroughly orientalized, used to insist on his valet, when he came to wake him, holding in his hand a tray containing some milk and a gold coin, so that his first glance on waking might fall on these lucky articles.

## NUMBERS.

There are mystic qualities attached to numbers. Thus, when Hindus have removed the ashes from a burning ground they write the figures 49 on the spot where the corpse was cremated. The Pandits explain this by saying that when written in Hindi the figures resemble the conch-shell and wheel of Vishnu, or that it is an invocation to the forty-nine winds of heaven to come and purify the ground. It is more probably based on the idea that the number seven, as is the case all over the world, has some mystic application. So in the folk-tales the number three has a special application to the tests of the hero who endures the assaults of demons or witches for three successive nights. The idea of luck in odd numbers is universal, and the seventh son of a seventh son is gifted with powers of healing.

## BODILY FUNCTIONS.

The functions of the body supply many omens. Thus, in

[1] Malcolm, "Central India," i. 253, note.

Somadeva we read: "My right eye throbbed frequently, as if with joy, and told me that it was none other than she."[1]

"When our cheek burns, or ear tingles, we usually say some one is talking of us," writes Sir Thomas Brown, "a conceit of great antiquity, and ranked among superstitious opinions by Pliny. He supposes it to have proceeded from the notion of a signifying Genius, or Universal Mercury, that conducted sounds to their distant subjects, and taught to hear by touch." The number of beliefs of this class is infinite and recorded in numerous popular handbooks.

## LUCKY AND UNLUCKY DAYS.

So, there are days which are lucky and unlucky. A Persian couplet lays down that one should not go east on Saturday and Monday; west on Friday and Sunday; north on Tuesday and Wednesday; south on Thursday. Even Lord Burghley advised his son to be cautious as regards the first Monday in April, when Cain was born and Abel slain; the second Monday in August, when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed; the last Monday in December, which was the birthday of Judas. Akbar laid down that the clothes which came into his wardrobe on the first day of the month Farwardîn were unlucky.[2] The way some people get over omens of this kind is to send some article ahead of the traveller on the unlucky day, which absorbs the ill omen, which would otherwise have fallen upon him.

The catalogue of superstitions of this class might be almost indefinitely extended. The principles on which most of them depend are clear enough. They rest on a sort of sympathetic magic. Things which are good-looking, people who are healthy or prosperous, give favourable omens, while those that are ugly, or of low caste, or associated with menial or unpleasant duties, and so on, are ominous. Europeans in India usually quite fail to realize the influence which such ideas exercise over the minds of the people. Most of us have been struck by the almost unaccountable

[1] Tawney, *loc cit.*, i. 128.

[2] Blochmann, "Aîni Akbari," i. 91.

failure of natives to attend a summons from the Courts, to keep an appointment to meet a European officer for the inspection of a school or market. If inquiries are made it will often be found that some idea of this kind explains the matter.

Thus, Colonel Tod describes how he had a visit from Mânik Chand. "He looked very disconsolate and explained that he had seven times left his tent and as often turned back, the bird of omen having each time passed him on the adverse side; but that at length he had determined to disregard it, as having forfeited confidence he was indifferent to the future."[1]

The same idea of good or evil omen attaches to many places and persons. "Nolai was built by Râja Nol. Its modern appellation of Barnagar has its origin in a strange, vulgar superstition of names of ill omen, which must not be pronounced before the morning meal. The city is called either Nolai or Barnagar, according to the hour at which the mention becomes necessary."[2] So with the town of Jammu in Kashmîr, which is unlucky from its association with Yama, the god of death; with Talwâra in the Hoshyârpur District, which is connected with the sword (*talwâr*); with Rohtak, which should be called Rustajgarh, and with numerous other places in Northern India. Thus, if people want to speak of Bulandshahr in the morning they call it by the old Hindi name of Unchgânw; Bhongânw in Mainpuri they call Pachkosa; Nânauta in Sahâranpur, Phûtashahr; Mandwa in Fatehpur, Rotiwâla, and so on.[3]

So, there is hardly a village in which it is not considered ominous to name before breakfast some one who, from his misery, rascality, or some other reason, is considered unlucky. In Mathura there is a tank built by Râja Patni Mall.

"Should a stranger visit it in the morning and inquire of any Hindu by whom it was constructed, he will have con-

[1] "Annals," i. 694.
[2] Malcolm, "Central India," i. 12, note.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 137, 207; ii. 28; iii. 18; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 15, 87, 137.

siderable difficulty in eliciting a straightforward answer. The Râja, it is said, was of such a delicate constitution that he could never at any time take more than a few morsels of the simplest food; hence arises the belief that any one who mentions him the first thing in the morning will, like him, have to pass the day fasting."[1] When we wonder at people suffering bondage of this kind, we must not forget that similar beliefs prevail in our own country. "In Buckie there are certain family names which no fisherman will pronounce. The ban lies particularly heavy on Ross. Coull also bears it, but not to such a degree. The folks of that village talk of spitting out the bad name."[2]

A similar euphemistic form of expression is often used in regard to animals. If you are civil and do not abuse the house rats, they will not damage your goods.[3]

The Mirzapur Patâris when they have to mention a monkey in the morning, call him Hanumân, and the bear Jatari, or "he with the long hair," or Dîmkhauiya, "he that eats white ants." The Pankas call the camel Lambghîncha or "long-necked." "I asked the Râja," says Gen. Sleeman, "whether we were likely to fall in with any hares, making use of the term Khargosh, or 'ass-eared.'" "Certainly not," said the Râja, "if you begin by abusing them by such a name. Call them Lambkanna or 'long-eared,' and you will get plenty."

It is, of course, easy to avoid the effect of evil omens by the use of a little tact and wit, as was the case with William the Conqueror, and there are many natives who are noted for their cleverness in this way. Of an Eastern Sultan it is told that, leaving his palace on a warlike expedition, his standard touched a cluster of lamps, called Surayya, because they resembled the Pleiades. He would have turned back, but one of his officers said, "My Lord! our standard has reached the Pleiades;" so he was relieved, advanced, and was victorious.

[1] Growse, "Mathura," 128.
[2] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 200 sq.
[3] "North Indian Note and Queries," i. 15.

## FACILITATING DEPARTURE OF AND BARRING THE GHOST.

We now come to consider the various means adopted to facilitate the journey of the departing soul, and to prevent it from returning as a malignant ghost to bring trouble, disease, or death on the survivors.

First comes the custom of placing the dying man on the ground at the moment of dissolution. This is done partly, as we have seen, through some feeling of the sanctity of Mother earth and that anyone resting on her bosom is safe from demoniacal agency, and partly that the spirit may meet with no obstruction in its passage through the air. This last idea prevails very generally. Thus, in Great Britain, death is believed to be retarded and the dying person kept in a state of suffering by having any lock closed or any bolt shut in the dwelling.[1]

The tortures which the soul undergoes in its journey to the land of the dead are vividly pictured in some of the sacred writings.[2] He is scorched by heat and pierced by wind and cold, attacked by beasts of prey, stumbling through thorns and filth, until he at last reaches the dread river Vaitaranî, which rolls its flood of abominations between him and the other shore. So, when a Hindu dies, a lamp made of flour is placed in his hands to light his ghost to the realm of Yama. Devout people believe that the spirit takes three hundred and sixty days to accomplish the journey, so an offering of that number of lamps is made. In order, also, to help him on his way, they feed a Brâhman every day for a year; if the deceased was a woman, a Brâhmanî is fed. The lamps are lighted facing the south, and this is the only occasion on which this is done, because the south is the realm of death, and no one will sleep or have their house door opening towards that ill-omened quarter of the sky.

With the same intention of aiding the spirit on his way, the relations howl during the funeral rites, like the keeners

[1] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 379; "Contemporary Review," xlviii. 108; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 206.
[2] Monier-Williams, "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 293.

at an Irish wake, in order to scare the evil spirits who would obstruct the passage of the soul to its final rest.[1]

Another plan is to carry out the corpse by a special way, which is then barred up, so that it may not be able to find its way back. The same end is attained by carrying out the corpse feet foremost. Thus Marco Polo writes: "Sometimes their sorcerers shall tell them that it is not good luck to carry the corpse out by the door, so they have to break a hole in the wall, and to draw it out that way when it is taken to the burning." It is needless to say that the same custom prevails in Great Britain.[2] The Banjâras of Khândesh reverse the process. They move their huts after a death, and make a special entrance instead of the ordinary door, which is supposed to be polluted by the passage of the spirit of the dead.[3] A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Maghs of Bengal. When the friends return from the cremation ground, if it is the master of the house who has died, the ladder leading up to the house is thrown down, and they must effect an entrance by cutting a hole in the back wall and so creeping up.[4] The theory appears to be that the evil spirits who were on the watch for the ghost may be lurking near the route by which the corpse was removed. We have the same idea in the European custom of saluting a corpse which is being carried past. Grose distinctly states that the homage was really offered to the attendant evil spirits.[5] So, the Birhors of Bengal, on the sixth day after birth, take the child out of the house by an opening made in the wall, so as to evade the evil spirit on the watch at the door.[6]

The most elaborate precautions are, however, devoted to barring out the ghost and preventing its return to its former home. The first of these consist of rules to prevent the

[1] Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 153.
[2] Gregor, *loc. cit.*, 206; Conway, "Demonology," i. 53; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 23.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," xii. 107; Campbell, "Notes," 394.
[4] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 34.
[5] Brand, "Observations," 450.
[6] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 219.

breach of the curiosity taboo. All through folk-lore we have instances of the danger of looking back, as in the case of Lot's wife. One of the maxims of Pythagoras was: "On setting out on a journey, do not return back; for if you do the fairies will catch you."[1] In one of the Kashmîr tales the youth is warned not to look back, otherwise he would be changed into a pillar of stone.[2] In one of the Italian spells the officiant is told: "Spit behind you thrice and look not behind you."[3] In an Indian tale the god promises to help the Brâhman and to follow him. The Brâhman looks back and the deity becomes a stone.[4] The danger of looking back is that the person's soul may be detained among the ghosts of the dead. This is the reason why Hindu mourners do not look back when they are returning from the cremation ground, and so we find that in Naxos it is a rule that none of the women who follow the bier must look back, for if she do she will die on the spot, or else one of her relations will die.[5]

Another means is to bar the return of the ghost in a physical way. Thus, when the Aheriyas of the North-Western Provinces burn the corpse, they fling pebbles in the direction of the pyre to prevent the spirit accompanying them. In the Himâlayas, when a man has attended the funeral ceremonies of a relative, he takes a piece of the shroud worn by the deceased and hangs it on some tree in the cremation ground, as an offering to the spirits which frequent such places. On his return, he places a thorny bush on the road wherever it is crossed by another path, and the nearest male relative of the deceased, on seeing this, puts a stone on it, and pressing it down with his feet, prays the spirit of the dead man not to trouble him.[6] Among the Bengal Limbus, the Phedangma attends the funeral, and delivers a brief address to the departed spirit on the general

[1] "Folk-lore," i. 155. [2] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 401.
[3] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 260.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 10; iii. 90.
[5] "Folk-lore," iv. 257.
[6] "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 832; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 126; Wilson, "Essays," ii. 292; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 147.

doom of mankind and the succession of life and death, concluding with the command to go where his fathers have gone, and not to come back to trouble the living with dreams.[1]

Practically the same custom still prevails in Ireland. When a corpse is carried to the grave, it is the rule for the bearers to stop half-way while the nearest relatives build up a small monument of loose stones, and no hand would dare to disturb this monument while the world lasts.[2]

In the case of the Dhângars and Basors, both menial tribes in the North-Western Provinces, we come across an usage which appears to be of a very primitive type and to be intended to secure the same object of barring the return of the ghost. After they have buried the corpse they return to the house of the dead man, kill a hog, and after separating the limbs, which are cooked for the funeral feast, they bury the trunk in the courtyard of the house, making an invocation to it as the representative of the dead man, and ordering him to rest there in peace and not worry his descendants. In the grave in which they bury this they pile stones and thorns to keep the ghost down.

Many other mourning customs appear to be based on the same principle. Thus, the old ritual directs that all who return from a funeral must touch the Lingam, fire, cow-dung, a grain of barley, a grain of sesame and water—"all," as Professor De Gubernatis says, "symbols of that fecundity which the contact with a corpse might have destroyed."[3] The real motive is doubtless to get rid of the ghost, which may have accompanied the mourners from the cremation ground. In Borneo rice is sprinkled over them with the same object, and the Basutos who have carried a corpse to the grave have their hands scratched with a knife and magic stuff is rubbed into the wound to remove the ghost which may be adhering to them.[4]

[1] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 19.
[2] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 83.
[3] "Zoological Mythology," i. 49.
[4] Frazer, "Golden Bough," i. 154.

In Upper India, among the lower Hindu castes, when the mourners return after the ceremony, they bathe, water being a scarer of ghosts, and at the house door they touch a stone, cowdung, iron, fire, and water, which have been placed outside the house in readiness when the corpse was removed. They then touch each their left ears with the little finger of the left hand, chew leaves of the bitter Nîm tree as a sign of mourning, and, after sitting some time in silence, disperse. Others, as the Ghasiyas, pass their feet through the smoke of burning oil, and others merely rub their feet with oil to drive away the ghost. The same idea of barring the return of the ghost by means of fire is found among the Nats of Kâthiâwâr, who burn hay on the face of the corpse before cremating it, and among the Thoris, who brand the great toe of the right foot of the deceased.[1]

This sitting in silence after the funeral is commonly explained merely as a mark of sympathy for the bereaved relatives, but an analogous custom in Ireland leads to the inference that the real reason may be to give the ghost time to depart, and not to interrupt in any way its progress to the spirit land. On the west coast of Ireland, after the death no wail is allowed to be raised until three hours have elapsed, because the sound of the crying would hinder the soul from speaking to God when it stands before Him, and would waken up the great dogs that are watching for the souls of the dead to devour them.[2]

We have in these rites and in the ordinary ritual some further illustrations of the protective influence of various articles which scare evil spirits. Thus, after the cremation the officiating Brâhman touches fire and bathes in order to purify himself and bar the return of the ghost; and the relative who lights the funeral pyre keeps a piece of iron with him, and goes about with a brass drinking vessel in his hand as a preservative against evil spirits while the period of mourning lasts. The system of protection is exactly the same as in the case of the young mother and her child

[1] "Bombay Gazetteer," viii. 159.
[2] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 83.

during the period of impurity consequent on parturition. As the Hedley Kow, the North British goblin, is peculiarly obnoxious at childbirth, so the Râkshasî of Indian folk-lore carries off the baby if the suitable precautions to repel her are neglected.[1]

Another method of barring the ghost is to bury the dead face downwards. This is common among sweepers of Upper India, whose ghosts, as seen in the probable connection of the Chûhra and the Churel, are always malignant. The same custom prevails among the Châran Banjâras of Khândesh. With this may be contrasted the Irish custom of loosening the nails of the coffin before interment, in order to facilitate the passage of the soul to heaven.[2]

A more elaborate ritual is that performed by the Mangars of Bengal. "One of the maternal relatives of the deceased, usually the maternal uncle, is chosen to act as priest for the occasion, and to conduct the ritual for the propitiation of the dead. First of all he puts in the mouth of the corpse some silver coins and some coral, which is much prized by the Himâlayan races. Then he lights a wick soaked in clarified butter, touches the lips with fire, scatters some parched rice about the mouth, and, lastly, covers the face with a cloth. Two bits of wood about three feet long are set up on either side of the grave. In the one are cut nine steps or notches, forming a ladder for the spirit of the dead to ascend to heaven; on the other every one present at the funeral cuts a notch to show that he has been there. As the maternal uncle steps out of the grave, he bids a solemn farewell to the dead and calls upon him to ascend to heaven by the ladder prepared for him. When the earth has been filled in, the stick notched by the funeral party is taken away to a distance and broken in two pieces, lest by its means the dead man should do the survivors a mischief.

[1] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 14, 271; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 305, 546; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 194 sq.; "Contemporary Review," xlviii. 113; Grierson, "Behâr Peasant Life," 388; "Folk-lore," ii. 26, 294.

[2] "Bombay Gazetteer," xii. 109; "Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thags," 9.

The pole used to carry the corpse is also broken up, and the spades and ropes are left in the grave."[1]

Among other devices to bar the return of the spirit may be noted the custom after a death in the family of preparing a resting-place for the ghost, until on the completion of the prescribed funeral rites it is admitted to the company of the sainted dead. Thus, among high-caste Hindus a jar of water is hung on a Pîpal tree for the refreshment of the spirit. The lower castes practise a more elaborate ritual. When the obsequies are completed they plant by the bank of a tank a bunch of grass, which the chief mourners daily water until the funeral rites are over. In Bombay Mr. Campbell writes:[2] "With a few exceptions generally among almost all classes of Hindus, when the dead is carried to the burning ground, on nearing the cemetery, a small stone is picked up and applied to the eyes, chest, and feet of the deceased. This stone is called Jivkhâda or the spirit stone, is considered as the representative or type of the deceased, and offerings of milk and water are given to it for ten days." Further he says: "On nearing the burning ground a small stone is picked up, and with it the feet, nose, and chest of the deceased are touched thrice. This stone is called Ashma, and is considered as a type of the deceased, and to it funeral oblations are offered for ten days. The bier is then put down, and a ceremony called Visrânti Srâddha is performed by the chief mourner, who comes forward and offers two balls of rice, called Bhût or 'spirit,' and Khechar, or 'roamer in the sky,' to the deceased. A hole is dug and the balls are buried there, and the litter is raised again on shoulders by four persons and carried to the cemetery."

The same idea of barring the return of the ghost accounts for the tombstone and cairn. British evil spirits have been secured in this way. Mr. Henderson tells of a vicious spirit which was entombed under a large stone for the space of ninety years and a day. Should any luckless person sit on

[1] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 75.

[2] "Notes," 214, 473.

that stone, he would be unable to leave it for ever.[1] In India, when a Ho or Munda dies, a very substantial coffin is constructed and placed on faggots of brushwood. The body, carefully washed and anointed with oil, is reverently laid in this coffin, and all the clothes, ornaments, and agricultural implements that the deceased was in the habit of using are placed with it, and also any money that he had with him when he died. Then the lid of the coffin is put on and the whole is burned. The bones are collected, taken in procession to the houses of friends, and every place where the deceased was in the habit of visiting. They are finally buried under a large slab, and a megalithic monument is erected to the memory of the dead. A quantity of rice is thrown into the grave with other food.[2]

This custom of parading the corpse also prevails in Ireland.

"I believe it is the custom in most, if not all, small towns in the south for a body to be carried, on its way to the graveyard, round the town by the longest way to bid its last farewell to the place. If the body be that of a murdered man, it is, if possible, carried past the house of the murderer. In county Wicklow, if an old church lies on the way to the grave, the body is borne round it three times."[3]

The Korkus of Hoshangâbâd have a remarkable method of laying the ghost. "Each clan has a place in which the funeral rite of every member of that clan must be performed; and however far the Korku may have wandered from the original centre of his tribe, he must return there to set his father's spirit to rest, and enable it to join its own family and ancestral ghosts. In this spot a separate stake (*munda*) is set up for every one whose rites are separately performed, and if a poor Korku performs them for several ancestors at once, he still puts up only one stake. It stands two or two and a half feet above the ground, planed smooth and squared at the top; on one side is carved at the top the

[1] "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 264.
[2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 202 sq.
[3] "Folk-lore," iv. 360.

likeness of the sun and moon, a spider, and a wheat ear, and below it a figure representing the principal person in whose honour it is put up, on horseback, with weapons in his hands. If more than one person's death is being celebrated, the rest are carved below as subordinate figures. I could not learn that the spirits are supposed to specially haunt this grove of stakes, or that Korkus have any dread of going near it at night; but they are far bolder than Hindus in this respect. When the funeral rite is to be performed, the first thing is to cut a bamboo and take out the pith, which is to represent the bones of the deceased, unless he has been burnt, in which case the bones themselves will have been preserved. A chicken is then sacrificed at the grave, and all that night the mourners watch and dance, and sing and make merry.

"Next day they go out very early, and cut down some perfectly unblemished tree, either teak or Salâi, not hollow or decayed or marked with an axe, which they cut to make the Munda stake. It is brought home at once and fashioned by a skilful man. In the afternoon it is carried to the place where cattle rest outside the village at noontide, and is washed and covered with turmeric like a bridegroom, and five chickens are sacrificed to it. It is then brought home again, and the pith representing the bones is taken outside the village and hung to some tree for safety during the night." (The idea, as we have elsewhere seen, is more probably to allow the ghost an opportunity of revisiting them.)

"All the friends and relations have by this time assembled, and this evening the chief funeral dinner is given. Next day, the whole party set out for the place where the stakes of their clan are set up, and after digging a hole and putting two copper coins in it, and the bones of the deceased or the pith which represents them, they put the stake in and fix it upright. Then they offer a goat or chickens to it, which are presently eaten close by, and in the evening the whole party returns home."[1]

All this ritual, carried out by one of the most primitive

[1] "Settlement Report," 263 sq.

Indian tribes, admirably illustrates the principles which we have been discussing. The obvious intention of the custom is to provide a resting-place for the spirit of the dead man, so that it may no longer be a source of danger to the survivors.

Similar customs prevail among other aboriginal races of the Central Provinces. In some places they burn their dead and then erect platforms, at the corners of which they place tall, red stones. In other places a sort of low square mound is raised over the remains of the deceased, at the corners of which are erected wooden posts, round which thread is wound to complete the sacred circle, and a stone is set up in the centre. Here offerings are presented, as in the jungle worship of their deities, of rice and other grains, fowls or sheep. On one occasion after the establishment of the Bhonsla or Marhâta Government in Gondwâna a cow was offered to the manes of a Gond; but this having come to the notice of the authorities, the relations were publicly whipped, and all were interdicted from doing such an act again.

To persons of more than usual reputation for sanctity offerings continue to be presented for many years after their decease. In the District of Bhandâra rude collections of coarse earthenware in the form of horses may be seen, which have accumulated from year to year on the tombs of such men.[1] The Pauariyas of Chota Nâgpur bury their dead, except the bodies of their priests, which are carried on a cot into the forests covered with leaves and branches and kept there, the reason assigned being that if laid in the village cemetery their ghosts become very troublesome. The bodies of people who die of contagious disease are similarly disposed of, the fact of death in this way being supposed to be the direct act of one of the deities who govern plagues.[2]

In a country where immediate burial or cremation is necessary and habitual, we need not expect to meet many examples of the customs, of which Mr. H. Spencer gives

[1] Hislop, "Papers," 19.
[2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 274.

examples,[1] of placing the body on a platform or the like in order to secure its personal comfort and conciliate the spirit. With the object of keeping a place ready for the spirit, some tribes are careful to preserve the body. The Singpoo of the north-eastern frontier keep the bodies of their dead chiefs for several years, and the Kûkis dry the dead at a slow fire,[2] practices which among more civilized races rise to embalming, as among the Chinese and Egyptians. The Thârus of the sub-Himâlayan Tarâî have a custom of placing the corpse on the village fetish mound during the night after death, and then the mourning goes on. The practice is perhaps intended as much to prevent, by the sanctity of the spot on which it is placed, the spirit from harming the survivors, as from any special desire to conciliate it. Among all Hindus, of course, as far as exigencies of the rapid disposal of the remains allow, it is habitual to treat the dead with respect; corpses are carefully covered with red cloth, and removed reverently for burial or cremation.

There is also among some tribes the custom of disinterring corpses after temporary burial. Thus, the Bhotiyas of the Himâlayas burn their dead only in the month of Kârttik; those who die in the meantime are temporarily buried and disinterred when the season for cremation arrives. The Kathkâris, a jungle tribe in Bombay, dig up the corpse some time after burial and hold a wake over the ghastly relics. They appear to do this only in the case of persons dying of cholera or small-pox, with some idea of appeasing the deity of disease. In parts of Oudh the custom is said still to prevail among the lower castes during epidemics, and it has recently attracted the attention of the sanitary officers.[3]

## THE FUNERAL FEAST.

The funeral feast is evidently a survival of the feast when the dead kinsman was consumed by his relatives, who

[1] "Principles of Sociology," i. 161.
[2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 12; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 33 sq.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 7; iii. 17; Campbell, "Notes," 495.

wished thus to partake of the properties of the dead. By another theory the feasting of the mourners is intended to resist the attempt of the ghost of the dead man to enter their bodies, food being offensive to spirits.

## MUTILATION A SIGN OF MOURNING.

Perhaps the only distinct survival of the ceremonial mutilation so common among savages as a sign of mourning, is the shaving which is compulsory on all the clansmen who shared in the death pollution. In the Odyssey, at the death of Antilochus, Peisistratus says, "This is now the only due we pay to miserable men, to cut the hair and let the tear fall from the cheek," and at the burial rites of Patroklus "they heaped all the corpse with their hair which they cut off and threw thereon." The cutting of the hair is always a serious matter. "Amongst the Maoris many spells were uttered at hair-cutting; one, for example, was spoken to consecrate the obsidian knife with which the hair was cut; another was pronounced to avert the thunder and lightning which hair-cutting was believed to cause."[1] This ceremonial shaving is also perhaps the only survival in Northern India of puberty initiation ceremonies. In some cases the hair cut appears to be regarded as a sacrifice. Thus between the ages of two and five the Bhîls shave the heads of their children. The child's aunt takes the hair in her lap, and wrapping it in her clothes, receives a cow, buffalo, or other resent from the child's parent.[2]

## RESPECT PAID TO HAIR.

All over the world the hair is invested with particular sanctity as embodying the strength of the owner, as in the Samson-Delilah story. Vishnu, according to the old story, took two hairs, a white and a black one, and these became Balarâma and Krishna. Many charms are worked through hair, and if a witch gets possession of it she can work evil to the owner. An Italian charm directs, "When you enter

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough," i. 196. [2] "Bombay Gazetteer," iii. 220.

any city, collect before the gate as many hairs as you will which may lie on the road, saying to yourself that you do this to remove your headache, and bind one of the hairs to your head."[1] The strength of Nisus lay in his golden hair, and when it was pulled out he was killed by Minos. It is this power of hair which possibly accounts for its preservation as a relic of the dead in lockets and bracelets, or, as Mr. Hartland shows, the idea at the root of these practices is that of sacramental communion with the dead.[2]

We have already come across instances of growing hair as a curse. Mr. Frazer gives numerous examples of this custom among savage races, and in the Teutonic mythology the avenger of Baldur will not cut his hair until he has killed his enemy.

In the folk-tales hair is a powerful *deus ex machinâ*, human hair for choice, but any kind will answer the purpose. It is one of the most common incidents that the hero recognizes the heroine by a lock of her hair which floats down the stream.[3]

A curious instance of mutilation regarded as a charm may be quoted from Bengal. Should a woman give birth to several stillborn children, in succession, the popular belief is that the same child reappears on each occasion. So, to frustrate the designs of the evil spirit that has taken possession of the child, the nose or a portion of the ear is cut off and the body is cast on a dunghill.

## FOOD FOR THE DEAD.

Another means for conciliating the spirit of the dead man is to lay up food for its use.[4] This is intended partly as provision for the ghost in its journey to the other world.

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 281.

[2] "Legend of Perseus," ii. 320.

[3] Temple, "Wide-awake Tales," 414; "Legends of the Panjâb," i. Introduction xix.; "Folk-lore," ii. 236; Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 504; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 341; Campbell, "Santâl Folk-tales," 16; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 382.

[4] Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 157, 206; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 482; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 37; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 21 sq.

But in some cases it would seem that there is a different basis for the custom. As we have seen, it is dangerous to eat the food of fairy-land, and unless food is supplied to the wandering ghost, it may be obliged to eat the food of the lower world and hence be unable to return to the world of men. According to the ancient Indian ritual it was recommended to put into the hands of the dead man the reins of the animal killed in the funeral sacrifice, or in default of an animal victim at least two cakes of rice or flour, so that he may throw them to the dogs of Yama, which would otherwise bar his passage,[1] and the same idea constantly appears in the folk-tales where the hero takes some food with him which he flings to the fierce beasts which prevent him from gaining the water of life or whatever may have been the test imposed upon him. The use of pulse in the funeral rites depends upon the same principle, and in the Greek belief the dead carried vegetables with them to hell, either to win the right of passage or as provisions for the road.

## ARTICLES LEFT WITH THE CORPSE.

Hence too comes the practice of burning with the corpse the articles which the dead man was in the habit of using. They rise with the fumes of the pyre and solace him in the world of spirits. The Kos told Colonel Dalton that the reason of this was that they were unwilling to derive any immediate benefit by the death of a member of the family. Hence they burn his wearing apparel and personal effects, but they do not destroy clothes and other things which have not been worn. For this reason, old men of the tribe, in a spirit of careful economy, avoid wearing new clothes, so that they may not be wasted at the funeral.[2]

The custom of laying out food for the ghost still prevails in Ireland, where it is a very prevalent practice during some nights after death to leave food outside the house, a griddle cake or a dish of potatoes. If it is gone in the morning, the

[1] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," i. 49.
[2] "Descriptive Ethnology," 205.

spirits must have taken it, for no human being would touch the food left for the dead, as it might compel him to join their company. On November Eve food is laid out in the same way.[1]

There are numerous examples of similar practices in India. The Mhârs of Khândesh, when they remove a corpse, put in its mouth a Pân leaf with a gold bead from his wife's necklace. At the grave the brother or son of the dead man wets the end of his turban and drops a little water on the lips of the corpse.[2] So the Greeks used to put a coin in the dead man's mouth to enable him to pay his fare to Charon. In the Panjâb it is a common practice to put in the mouth of the corpse the Pancharatana or five kinds of jewels, gold, silver, copper, coral, and pewter. The leaves of the Tulasi or sweet basil and Ganges water are put into the mouth of a dying man, and the former into the ears and nostrils also. They are said to be offerings to Yama, the god of death, who on receiving them shows mercy to the soul of the deceased. The same customs generally prevail among the Hindus of Northern India.

Among the Buddhists of the Himâlaya, Moorcroft was present at the consecration of the food of the dead.[3] The Lâma consecrated barley and water and poured them from a silver saucer into a brass vessel, occasionally striking two brass cymbals together, reciting or chanting prayers, to which from time to time an inferior Lâma uttered responses aloud, accompanied by the rest in an undertone. This was intended for the use of the souls in hell, who would starve were it not provided. The music and singing, if we may apply the analogy of Indian practices, are intended to scare the vagrant ghosts, who would otherwise consume or defile the food.

The same is the case among the Drâvidian races. Thus, the Bhuiyârs of Mirzapur after the funeral feast throw a cupful of oil and some food into the water hole in which the

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 118, 140.
[2] "Bombay Gazetteer," xii. 118; "Folk-lore," iv. 245.
[3] "Travels in the Himâlaya," i. 342.

ashes of the dead man are deposited. They say that he will never be hungry or want oil to anoint himself after bathing. The Korwas, when burning a corpse, place with it the ornaments and clothes of the deceased, and an axe, which they do not break, as is the habit of many other savages. They say that the spirit of the dead man will want it to hack his way through the jungles of the lower world. When the Bhuiyârs cremate a corpse they throw near the spot an axe, if the deceased was a man, and a Khurpi or weeding spud, if a woman. No one would dare to appropriate such things, as he would be forced to join the ghastly company of their owners. Where the corpse is burned they leave a platter made of leaves containing a little boiled rice, and they sprinkle on the ground all the ordinary kinds of grain and some turmeric and salt as food for the dead in the next world.

All these tribes and many low-caste Hindus in Northern India lay out platters of food under the eaves of the house during the period of mourning, and they ascertain by peculiar marks which they examine next day whether the spirit has partaken of the food or not. Among the jungle tribes there is a rule that the food for the dead is prepared, not by the house-mother, but by the senior daughter-in-law, and even if incapacitated by illness from performing this duty, she is bound at least to commence the work by cooking one or two cakes, the rest being prepared by one of the junior women of the family.

Among the more Hinduized Majhwârs and Patâris we reach the stage where the clothes, implements of the deceased, and some food are given to the Patâri priest, who, by vicariously consuming them, lays up a store for the use of the dead man in the other world. This is the principle on which food and other articles are given to the Mahâbrâhman or ordinary Hindu funeral priest at the close of the period of mourning.

Among the Bengal tribes, the Mâl Pahariyas pour the blood of goats and fowls on their ancestral memorial pillars that the souls may not hunger in the world of the dead.

Among the Bhûmij, at the funeral ceremony, an outsider, who is often a Laiya or priest, comes forward to personate the deceased, by whose name he is addressed, and asked what he wants to eat. Acting thus as the dead man's proxy, he mentions various articles of food, which are placed before him. After making a regular meal, he goes away, and the spirit of the deceased is believed to go with him. So among the Kolis of the Konkan, the dead man's soul is brought back into one of the mourners. Among the Vârlis of Thâna, on the twelfth day after death, a dinner is given to the nearest relations, and during the night the spirit of the dead enters into one of the relations, who entertains the rest with the story of some event in the dead man's life. Among the Santâls, one of the mourners drums by the ashes of the dead, and the spirit enters the body, when the mourner shaves, bathes, eats a cock, and drinks some liquor.[1]

Among the Bengal Chakmas, a bamboo post or other portion of a dead man's house is burned with him, probably in order to provide him with shelter in the next world. Among the Kâmis, before they can partake of the funeral feast, a small portion of every dish must be placed in a leaf plate and taken out into the jungle for the spirit of the dead man, and carefully watched until a fly or other insect settles upon it. The watcher then covers up the plate with a slab of stone, eats his own food, and returns to tell the relatives that the spirit has received the offering prepared for him.

## THE FLY AS A LIFE INDEX.

The fly here represents the spirit, an idea very common in folk-lore, where an insect often appears as the Life Index. An English lady has been known in India to stop playing lawn-tennis because a butterfly settled in the court. In Cornwall wandering spirits take the form of moths, ants, and weasels.[2] We have the same idea in Titus Andronicus,

[1] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 126, 174, 395; ii. 71; "Bombay Gazetteer," xiii. 187; Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 218.

[2] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 82.

when Marcus, having been rebuked for killing a fly, gives as his reason,—

> "It was a black, ill-favoured fly,
> Like to the empress Moor; therefore I kill'd him."

A fly is the guardian spirit of St. Michael's well in Banff.[1]

## RECALLING THE GHOST.

But while it is expedient by some or other of these devices to bar or lay the ghost, or prevent its return by providing for its journey to, and accommodation in the next world, some tribes have a custom of making arrangements to bring back the soul of the deceased to the family abode, where he is worshipped as a household spirit. Some of the Central Indian tribes catch the spirit re-embodied in a fowl or fish, some bring it home in a pot of water or flour.[2] Among the Tipperas of Bengal, when a man dies in a strange village separated from his home by the river, they stretch a white string from bank to bank along which the spirit is believed to return.[3] This illustrates an idea common to all folk-lore that the ghost cannot cross running water without material assistance. Among the Hos on the evening of the cremation day certain preparations are made in anticipation of a visit from the ghost. Some boiled rice is laid apart for it, and ashes are sprinkled on the floor, in order that, should it come, its footsteps may be detected. On returning they carefully scrutinize the ashes and the rice, and if there is the faintest indication of these having been disturbed, it is attributed to the action of the spirit, and they sit down shivering with horror and crying bitterly, as if they were by no means pleased with the visit, though it be made at their earnest solicitation.[4]

## ASHES.

This use of ashes as a means of identifying the ghost, constitutes in itself quite an important chapter in folk-lore.

[1] Brand, "Observations," 519. [2] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 152.
[3] Risley, *loc. cit.*, ii. 326. [4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology, 204 sq.

It reminds us of the Apocryphal legend of Bel and the Dragon. The idea probably originally arose from the respect paid to the ashes of the house fire by primitive races, among whom the hearth and the kitchen are the home of the household godlings.

There are numerous instances of this practice from Europe. In the Western Islands of Scotland on Candlemas Day the mistress takes a sheaf of oats, dresses it in woman's apparel, and after putting it in a large basket beside which a wooden club is placed, cries three times, "Briid is come! Briid is welcome!" Next morning they look for the impression of Briid's club in the ashes, which is an omen of a good harvest.[1] Ash-riddlin is a custom in the northern counties. The ashes being riddled or sifted on the hearth, if any one of the family be to die within the year, the mark of a shoe will be impressed upon the ashes.[2] In Wales they make a bonfire, and when it is extinguished each one throws a white stone into the ashes. In the morning they search out the stones, and if any one is found wanting, he that threw it will die within the year.[3] In Manxland the ashes are carefully swept to the open hearth and nicely flattened down by the women before they go to bed. In the morning they look for footmarks on the hearth, and if they find such footmarks directed to the door, it means in the course of the year a death in the family, and if the reverse, they expect an addition to it by marriage.[4] According to one of the Italian charms, "And they were accustomed to divine sometimes with the ashes from the sacrifices. And to this day there is a trace of it, when that which is to be divined is written on the ashes with the finger or with the stick. Then the ashes are stirred by the fresh breeze, and one looks for the letters which they form by being moved."[5]

Amongst some Hindus, on the tenth night after the death of a person, he who fired the funeral pyre is required to sift

[1] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 57.
[2] Ibid., 199.
[3] Ibid., 398.
[4] "Folk-lore," ii. 310.
[5] Leland "Etruscan Roman Remains," 345.

some ashes, near which a lamp is placed, and the whole covered with a basket. Next morning the ashes are examined, and the ghost is supposed to have migrated into the animal whose mark appears on the ashes.[1] So, at the annual feast of the dead, the jungle tribes of Mirzapur spread ashes on the floor, and a mark generally like that of a chicken's foot shows that the family ghosts have visited the house. "On New Year's Eve," says Aubrey, "sift or smooth the ashes and leave it so when you go to bed; next morning look, and if you find there the likeness of a coffin, one will die; if a ring, one will be married."[2] In North Scotland, on the night after the funeral, bread and water are placed in the apartment where the body lay. The dead man was believed to return that night and partake of the food; unless this were done the spirits could not rest in the unseen world. This probably accounts for the so-called "food vases" and "drinking cups" found in the long barrows.[3] All Hindus believe that the ghosts of the dead return on the night of the Diwâlî or feast of lamps.

## REPLACING HOUSEHOLD VESSELS.

After a death all the household earthen pots are broken and replaced. It has been suggested that this is due either to the belief that the ghost of the dead man is in some of them, or that the custom may have some connection with the idea of providing the ghost with utensils in the next world.[4] In popular belief, however, the custom is explained by the death pollution attaching to all the family cooking vessels, which, if of metal, are purified with fire. The vessel is the home of the spirit: "At most Hindu funerals a water jar is carried round the pyre, and then dashed to the ground, apparently to show that the spirit has left its

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 35.
[2] "Remaines," 95; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 57.
[3] Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 213.
[4] Frazer, "Contemporary Review," xlviii. 117; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 195.

earthly home. So, the Surat Chondras set up as spirit homes large whitewashed earthen jars laid on their sides. So, to please any spirit likely to injure a crop, an earthen jar is set on a pole as the spirit's house, and so at a wedding or other ceremonies, jars, sometimes empty, sometimes filled with water, are piled as homes for planets and other marriage gods and goddesses, that they may feel pleased and their influence be friendly." [1]

We have already met with the Kalasa or sacred jar. The same idea of the pollution of earthen vessels prevailed among the Hebrews, when an earthen vessel remaining in a tent in which a person died was considered impure for seven days.[2]

## FUNERAL RITES IN EFFIGY.

When a person dies at a distance from home, and it is impossible to perform the funeral rites over the body, it is cremated in effigy. The special term for this is Kusa-putra, or "son of the Kusa grass." Colonel Tod gives a case of this when Râja Ummeda of Bûndi abdicated: "An image of the prince was made, and a pyre was erected on which it was consumed. The hair and whiskers of Ajît, his successor, were taken off and offered to the Manes; lamentations and wailing were heard in the Queen's apartments, and the twelve days of mourning were held as if Ummeda had really deceased; on the expiration of which the installation of his successor took place." [3]

## GHOSTS LENGTHENING THEMSELVES.

Ghosts, as we have already seen in the case of the Naugaza, have the power of changing their length. In the well-known tale in the Arabian Nights the demon is shut up in a jar under the seal of the Lord Solomon, as in one of the German tales the Devil is shut up in a crevice in a

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 334.
[2] Numbers xix. 15.
[3] "Annals," ii. 542.

pine tree, and the ghost of Major Weir of Edinburgh resided in his walking-stick.[1] Some of the Indian ghosts, like the Ifrît of the Arabian Nights, can grow to the length of ten yojanas or eighty miles. In one of the Bengal tales a ghost is identified because she can stretch out her hands several yards for a vessel.[2] Some ghosts possess the very dangerous power of entering human corpses, like the Vetâla, and swelling to an enormous size. The Kharwârs of Mirzapur have a wild legend, which tells how long ago an unmarried girl of the tribe died, and was being cremated. While the relations were collecting wood for the pyre, a ghost entered the corpse, but the friends managed to expel him. Since then great care is taken not to leave the bodies of women unwatched. So, in the Panjâb, when a great person is cremated the bones and ashes are carefully watched till the fourth day, to prevent a magician interfering with them. If he has a chance, he can restore the deceased to life, and ever after retain him under his influence. This is the origin of the custom in Great Britain of waking the dead, a practice which "most probably originated from a silly superstition as to the danger of a corpse being carried off by some of the agents of the invisible world, or exposed to the ominous liberties of brute animals."[3] But in India it is considered the best course, if the corpse cannot be immediately disposed of, to measure it carefully, and then no malignant Bhût can occupy it. We have already met with instances of a similar idea of the mystic effect supposed to follow on measuring or weighing grain.

## KINDLY GHOSTS.

Most of the ghosts whom we have been as yet considering are malignant. There are, however, others which are friendly. Such are the German Elves, the Robin Good-

[1] Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 402; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 380.
[2] Lane, "Arabian Nights," i. 71; Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 198, 274.
[3] Brand, "Observations," 435.

fellow, Puck, Brownie and the Cauld Lad of Hilton of England, the Glashan of the Isle of Man, the Phouka or Leprehaun of Ireland. Such, in one of his many forms, is the Brahmadaitya, or ghost of a Brâhman who has died unmarried. In Bengal he is believed to be more neat and less mischievous than other ghosts; the Bhûts carry him in a palanquin, he wears wooden sandals, lives in a Banyan or Bel tree, and Sankhachûrnî is his mistress. He appears to be about the only respectable bachelor ghost. In one of the folk-tales a ghostly reaper of this class assists his human friend, and can cut as much of the crop in a minute as an ordinary person can in a day.[1] So, the Manx Brownie is called the Fenodyree, and he is described as a hairy, clumsy fellow who would thresh a whole barnful of corn in a single night for the people to whom he felt well disposed.[2] This Brahmadaitya is the leader of the other ghosts in virtue of his respectable origin; he lives in a tree, and, unlike other varieties of Bhûts, does not eat all kinds of food, but only such as are considered ceremonially pure. He never, like common Bhûts, frightens men, but is harmless and quiet, never plaguing benighted travellers, nor entering into the bodies of living men or women, but if his dignity be insulted, or any one trespass on his domains, he wrings their necks.

## TREE GHOSTS.

Hence in regard to trees great caution is required. A Hindu will never climb one of the varieties of fig, the Ficus Cordifolia, except through dire necessity, and if a Brâhman is forced to ascend the Bel tree or Aegle Marmelos for the purpose of obtaining the sacred trefoil so largely used in Saiva worship, he only does so after offering prayers to the gods in general, and to the Brahmadaitya in particular who may have taken up his abode in this special tree.

These tree ghosts are, it is needless to say, very numerous.

[1] Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales of Bengal," 198, 206; "Govinda Sâmanta," i. 135; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 199.
[2] "Folk-lore," ii. 286.

Hence most local shrines are constructed under trees, and in one particular tree, the Bîra, the jungle tribes of Mirzapur locate Bâgheswar, the tiger godling, one of their most dreaded deities. In the Konkan, according to Mr. Campbell,[1] the medium or Bhagat who becomes possessed is called Jhâd, or "tree," apparently because he is a favourite dwelling-place for spirits. In the Dakkhin it is believed that the spirit of the pregnant woman or Churel lives in a tree, and the Abors and Padams of East Bengal believe that spirits in trees kidnap children.[2] Many of these tree spirits appear in the folk-tales. Thus, Devadatta worships a tree which one day suddenly clave in two and a nymph appeared who introduced him inside the tree, where was a heavenly palace of jewels, in which, reclining on a couch, appeared Vidyatprabhâ, the maiden daughter of the king of the Yakshas; in another story the mendicant hears inside a tree the Yaksha joking with his wife.[3] So Daphne is turned into a tree to avoid the pursuit of her lover.

## THE BRAHMAPARUSHA.

But there is another variety of Brâhman ghost who is much dreaded. This is the Brahmaparusha or Brahma Râkshasa. In one of the folk-tales he appears black as soot, with hair yellow as the lightning, looking like a thunder-cloud. He had made himself a wreath of entrails; he wore a sacrificial cord of hair; he was gnawing the flesh of a man s head and drinking blood out of a skull. In another story these Brahma Râkshasas have formidable tusks, flaming hair, and insatiable hunger. They wander about the forests catching animals and eating them.[4] Mr. Campbell tells a Marhâta legend of a master who became a Brahmaparusha in order to teach grammar to a pupil. He haunted a house at Benares, and the pupil went to take lessons from him. He promised to teach him the whole

[1] "Notes," 165. [2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 25.
[3] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 229; ii. 116; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 476; ii. 148, 215.
[4] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 338, 511.

science in a year on condition that he never left the house. One day the boy went out and learned that the house was haunted, and that he was being taught by a ghost. The boy returned and was ordered by the preceptor to take his bones to Gaya, and perform the necessary ceremonies for the emancipation of his soul. This he did, and the uneasy spirit of the learned man was laid.[1] We have already encountered similar angry Brâhman ghosts, such as Harshu Pânrê and Mahenî.

## THE JÂK AND JÂKNI.

The really friendly agricultural sprites are the pair known in some places as the Jâk and Jâknî, and in others as Chordeva and Chordevî, the "thief godlings." With the Jâk we come on another of these curious survivals from the early mythology in a sadly degraded form. As Varuna, the god of the firmament, has been reduced in these later days to Barun, a petty weather godling, so the Jâk is the modern representative of the Yaksha, who in better times was the attendant of Kuvera, the god of wealth, in which duty he was assisted by the Guhyaka. The character of the Yaksha is not very certain. He was called Punya-janas, "the good people," but he sometimes appears as an imp of evil. In the folk-tales, it must be admitted, the Yakshas have an equivocal reputation. In one story the female, or Yakshinî, bewilders travellers at night, makes horns grow on their foreheads, and finally devours them; in another the Yakshas have, like the Churel, feet turned the wrong way and squinting eyes; in a third they separate the hero from the heroine because he failed to make due offerings to them on his wedding day. On the other hand, in a fourth tale the Yakshinî is described as possessed of heavenly beauty; she appears again when a sacrifice is made in a cemetery to get her into the hero's power, as a heavenly maiden beautifully adorned, seated in a chariot of gold surrounded by lovely girls; and lastly, a Brâhman meets some

[1] "Notes," 146 sq.

Buddhist ascetics, performs the Uposhana vow, and would have become a god, had it not been that a wicked man compelled him by force to take food in the evening, and so he was re-born as a Guhyaka.[1]

In the modern folk-lore of Kashmîr, the Yaksha has turned into the Yech or Yach, a humorous, though powerful, sprite in the shape of a civet cat of a dark colour, with a white cap on his head. This small high cap is one of the marks of the Irish fairies, and the Incubones of Italy wear caps, "the symbols of their hidden, secret natures." The feet of the Yech are so small as to be almost invisible, and it squeaks in a feline way. It can assume any shape, and if its white cap can be secured, it becomes the servant of the possessor, and the white cap makes him invisible.[2]

In the Vishnu Purâna we read that Vishnu created the Yakshas as beings emaciate with hunger, of hideous aspect, and with big beards, and that from their habit of crying for food they were so named.[3] By the Buddhists they were regarded as benignant spirits. One of them acts as sort of chorus in the Meghadûta or "Cloud Messenger" of Kâlidâsa. Yet we read of the Yaka Alawaka, who, according to the Buddhist legend, used to live in a Banyan tree, and slay any one who approached it; while in Ceylon they are represented as demons whom Buddha destroyed.[4] In later Hinduism they are generally of fair repute, and one of them was appointed by Indra to be the attendant of the Jaina Saint Mahâvîra. It is curious that in Gujarât the term Yaksha is applied to Musalmâns, and in Cutch to a much older race of northern conquerors.[5]

At any rate the modern Jâk and Jâknî, Chordeva and Chordevî, are eminently respectable and kindly sprites. They are, in fact, an obvious survival of the pair of corn

[1] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 337, 204; ii. 427, 83.
[2] Temple, "Wide-awake Stories," 317; "Indian Antiquary," xi. 260 sq.; Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 163.
[3] As if from *Jaksh*, "to eat;" a more probable derivation is *Yaksh*, "to move," "to worship."
[4] Spencer Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," 269; Conway, "Demonology," i. 151 sq.
[5] "Bombay Gazetteer," v. 133, 236.

spirits which inhabit the standing crop.[1] The Jâk is compelled to live apart from the Jâknî in neighbouring villages, but he is an uxorious husband, and robs his own village to supply the wants of his consort. So, if you see a comparatively barren village, which is next to one more productive, you may be sure that the Jâk lives in the former and the Jâknî in the latter. The same is the character of the Chor or Chordeva and the Chornî or Chordevî of the jungle tribes of Mirzapur

## GHOSTS WHICH PROTECT CATTLE.

In the Hills there are various benevolent ghosts or godlings who protect cattle. Sâin, the spirit of an old ascetic, helps the Bhotiyas to recover lost cattle, and Siddhua and Buddhua, the ghosts of two harmless goatherds, are invoked when a goat falls ill.[2] In the same class is Nagardeo of Garhwâl, who is represented in nearly every village by a three-pronged pike or Trisûla on a platform. When cows and buffaloes are first milked, the milk is offered to him. It is perhaps possible that from some blameless godling of the cow-pen, such as Nagardeo, the cultus of Pasupatinâtha, "the lord of animals," an epithet of Siva or Rudra, who has a stately shrine at Hardwâr, where his lingam is wreathed with cobras, was derived. Another Hill godling of the same class is Chaumu or Baudhân, who has a shrine in every village, which the people at the risk of offending him are supposed to keep clean and holy. Lamps are lighted, sweetmeats and the fruits of the earth are offered to him. When a calf dies the milk of the mother is considered unholy till the twelfth day, when some is offered to the deity. He also recovers lost animals, if duly propitiated, but if neglected, he brings disease on the herd.[3]

Another cattle godling in the Hills is Kaluva or Kalbisht, who lived on earth some two hundred years ago. His enemies persuaded his brother-in-law to kill him. After his

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 17. [2] "Himâlayan Gazetteer," iii. 117.
[3] Ibid., ii. 833; "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 56.

death he became a benevolent spirit, and the only people he injured were the enemies who compassed his death. His name is now a charm against wild beasts, and people who are oppressed resort to his shrine for justice. Except in name he seems to have nothing to say to Kâlu Kahâr, who was born of a Kahâr girl, who by magical charms compelled King Solomon to marry her. His fetish is a stick covered with peacock's feathers to which offerings of food are made. He has more than a quarter of a million worshippers, according to the last census, in the Meerut Division.

## BUGABOOS.

We close this long list of ghostly personages with those who are merely bugaboos to frighten children. Such are Hawwa, probably a corruption through the Prâkrit of the Sanskrit Bhûta, and Humma or Humu, who is said to be the ghost of the Emperor Humayûn, who died by an untimely death. Akin perhaps to him are the Humanas of Kumaun, who take the form of men, but cannot act as ordinary persons.[1]

These sprites are to the Bengâli matron what Old Scratch and Red Nose and Bloody Bones are to English mothers,[2] and when a Bengâli baby is particularly naughty its mother threatens to send for Warren Hastings. Akin to these is Ghoghar, who represents Ghuggu or the hooting of the owl.[3] Nekî Bîbî, "the good lady;" Mâno or the cat; Bhâkur; Bhokaswa; and Dokarkaswa, "the old man with the bag," who carries off naughty children, who is the Mr. Miacca of the English nursery.[4]

[1] Ganga Datt, "Folk-lore," 71.

[2] Aubrey, "Remaines," 59; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 263.

[3] Ghoghar in Bombay takes the form of a native seaman or Lascar Bombay Gazetteer," iv. 343.

[4] Jacobs, "English Fairy Tales."

SACRED FIG TREE AND SHRINES.

# CHAPTER II.

## TREE AND SERPENT WORSHIP.

Sylvarum numina, Fauni
Et satyri fratres.
*Ovid*, Metamorp. iii. 163.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ
Κυάνεος ἑλέλικτο δράκων, κεφαλαὶ δὲ οἱ ἦσαν
Τρεῖς ἀμφιστρεφέες, ἑνὸς αὐχένος ἐκπεφύυῖαι.
*Iliad*, xi. 38-40.

THE worship of trees and serpents may be conveniently considered together; not that there is much connection between these two classes of belief, but because this course has been followed in Mr. Ferguson's elaborate monograph on the subject.

The worship of trees appears to be based on many converging lines of thought, which it is not easy to disentangle. Mr. H. Spencer[1] classes it as an aberrant species of ancestor worship: "A species somewhat more disguised externally, but having the same internal nature; and though it develops in three different directions, still these have all one common origin. First, the toxic excitements produced by certain plants are attributed to the agency of spirits or demons; secondly, tribes that have come out of places characterized by particular trees or plants, unawares change the legend of emergence from them into the legend of descent from them; thirdly, the naming of individuals after plants becomes a source of confusion."

According to Dr. Tylor,[2] again, the worship depends upon man's animistic theory of nature: "Whether such a tree

[1] "Principles of Sociology," i. 359.
[2] "Primitive Culture," ii. 221, 89.

is looked on as inhabited by its own proper life and soul, or as possessed like a fetish by some other spirit which has entered it or used it for a body, is often hard to determine. The tree may be the spirits' perch or shelter (as we have seen in the case of the Churel or Râkshasa), or the sacred grove is assumed to be the spirits' resort."

Mr. Frazer has given a very careful analysis of this branch of popular religion.[1] He shows that to the savage in general the world is animate and trees are no exception to the rule; he thinks they have souls like his own and treats them accordingly; they are supposed to feel injuries done to them; the souls of the dead sometimes animate them; the tree is regarded sometimes as the body, sometimes as the home of the tree spirit; trees and tree spirits give rain and sunshine; they cause the crops to grow; the tree spirit makes the herds to multiply and blesses women with offspring; the tree spirit is often conceived and represented as detached from the tree and even as embodied in living men and women.

The basis of the cultus may then perhaps be stated as follows: There is first the tree which is regarded as embodying or representing the spirit which influences the fertility of crops and human beings. Hence the respect paid to memorial trees, where the people assemble, as at the village Pîpal, which is valued for its shade and beauty and its long connection with the social life of the community. This would naturally be regarded as the abode of some god and forms the village shrine, a convenient centre for the religious worship of the local deities, where they reside and accept the worship and offerings of their votaries.

It may, again, be the last survival of the primitive forest, where the dispossessed spirits of the jungle find their final and only resting-place. Such secluded groves form the only and perhaps the earliest shrine of many primitive races.

Again, an allegorical meaning would naturally be attached to various trees. It is invested with a mystic power owing to the mysterious waving of its leaves and branches, the

[1] "Golden Bough," i. 39.

result of supernatural agency; and this would account for the weird sounds of the forest at night.

Many trees are evergreen, and thus enjoy eternal life. Every tree is a sort of emblem of life, reproducing itself in some uncanny fashion with each recurring spring.

It has some mystic connection with the three worlds—

*Quantum vertice ad auras*
*Aetherias tantum radice in Tartara tendit.*

Like Yggdrassil, it connects the world of man with the world of gods, and men may, like Jack of the Beanstalk, climb by its aid to heaven. In this connection it may be noted that many Indian tribes bury their dead in trees. The Khasiyas of East Bengal lay the body in the hollow trunk of a tree. The Nâgas dispose of their dead in the same way, or hang them in coffins to the branches. The Mâriya Gonds tie the corpse to a tree and burn it. The Malers lay the corpse of a priest, whose ghost often gives trouble, under a tree and cover it with leaves.[1] Similar customs prevail among primitive races in many parts of the world.

The tree embodies in itself many utilities necessary to human life, and many qualities which menace its existence. Its wood is the source of fire, itself a fetish. Its fruits, juices, flowers or bark are sources of food or possess intoxicating or poisonous attributes, which are naturally connected with demoniaçal influences. Trees often develop into curious or uncanny forms, which compel fear or adoration. Thus according to the old ritual[2] trees which have been struck by lightning, or knocked down by inundation, or which have fallen in the direction of the south, or which grew on a burning ground or consecrated site, or at the confluence of large rivers, or by the roadside; those which have withered tops, or an entanglement of heavy creepers

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 56, 40, 43, 283; Hislop, "Papers," 10.

[2] "Brihatsanhita," Rajendra Lâla Mitra, "Indo-Aryans," i. 245.

upon them, or are the receptacles of many honey-combs or birds' nests, are reckoned unfit for the fabrication of bedsteads, as they are inauspicious and sure to bring disease and death. The step from such beliefs to the worship of any curious and remarkable tree is easy.

Hence the belief that the planting of a grove is a work of religious merit, which is so strongly felt by Hindus, and the idea that the grove has special religious associations, shown by the marriage of its trees to the well, and other rites of the same kind. In the Konkan it is very generally believed that barrenness is caused by uneasy spirits which wander about, and that if a home be made for the spirit by planting trees, it will go and reside there and the curse of barrenness will be removed.[1]

Though this branch of the subject has been pushed to quite an unreasonable length in some recent books,[2] there may be some association of tree worship with the phallic cultus, such as is found in the Asherah or "groves" of the Hebrews, the European Maypole, and so on. This has been suggested as an explanation of the honour paid by the Gypsy race in Germany to the fir tree, the birch and the hawthorn, and of the veneration of the Welsh Gypsies to the fasciated vegetable growth known to them as the Broado Koro.[3] In the same way an attempt has been made to connect the Bel tree with the Saiva worship of the Lingam and the lotus with the Yonî. But this part of the subject has been involved in so much crude speculation that any analogies of this kind, however tempting, must be accepted with the utmost caution.

Further than this, it may be reasonably suspected that this cultus rests to some extent on a basis of totemism. Some of the evidence in support of this view will be discussed elsewhere, but it is, on the analogy of the various modes in which the Brâhmanical pantheon has been recruited, not improbable that trees and plants, like the Tulasî and the

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 225.
[2] Forlong, "Rivers of Life;" Westropp, "Primitive Symbolism."
[3] Groome, "Encyclopædia Britannica," s.v. "Gypsies."

Pîpal, may have been originally tribal totems imported into Brâhmanism from some aboriginal or other foreign source.

On the whole it is tolerably certain that there is more in tree worship than can be accounted for either by Mr. Ferguson's theory that the worship sprang from a perception of the utility or beauty of trees, or by Mr. Spencer's theory of nicknames. It is sufficient to say that both fail to account for the worship of insignificant and comparatively useless shrubs, weeds, or grasses.

Tree worship holds an important part in the popular ritual and folk-lore. This is shown by the prejudice against cutting trees. The jungle tribes are very averse to cutting certain trees, particularly those which are regarded as sacred. If a Kharwâr, except at the time of the annual feast, cuts his tribal tree, the Karama, he loses wealth and life, and none of these tribes will cut the large Sâl trees which are fixed by the Baiga as the abode of the forest godling. This feeling prevails very strongly among the Maghs of Bengal. Nothing but positive orders and the presence of Europeans would induce them to trespass on many hill-tops, which they regarded as occupied by the tree demons. With the Europeans, however, they would advance fearlessly, and did not hesitate to fell trees, the blame of such sacrilege being always laid on the strangers. On felling any large tree, one of the party was always prepared with a green sprig, which he ran and placed in the centre of the stump when the tree fell, as a propitiation to the spirit which had been displaced so roughly, pleading at the same time the orders of the strangers for the work. In clearing one spot an orderly had to take the dâh or cleaver and fell the first tree himself before a Magh would make a stroke, and was considered to bear all the odium of the work with the disturbed spirits till the arrival of the Europeans relieved him of the burden.[1]

In folk-lore we have many magic trees. We have the Kalpataru or Kalpadruma, also known as Kalpavriksha, or Manoratha dayaka, the tree which grows in Swarga or the

[1] "Calcutta Review," xxvi. 512.

paradise of Indra and grants all desires. There is, again, the Pârijâta, which was produced at the churning of the ocean, and appropriated by Indra, from whom it was recovered by Krishna. The tree in the Meghadûta bears clothes, trinkets, and wine, which is like the Juniper tree of the German tale, which grants a woman a son. Many such trees appear in the Indian folk-tales. The King Jimutaketu had a tree in his house which came down from his ancestors, and was known as "the giver of desires"; the generous Induprabha craved a boon from Indra, and became a wishing tree in his own city; and the faithful minister of Yasaketu sees a wave rise out of the sea and then a wishing tree appears, "adorned with boughs glittering with gold, embellished with sprays of coral, bearing lovely fruits and flowers of jewels. And he beheld on its trunk a maiden, alluring on account of her wonderful beauty, reclining on a gem-bestudded couch."[1] So, in the story of Devadatta, the tree is cloven and a heavenly nymph appears. We have trees which, like those in the Odyssey, bear fruit and flowers at the same time, and in the garden of the Asura maiden "the trees were ever producing flowers and fruits, for all seasons were present there at the same time."[2]

We have many trees, again, which are produced in miraculous ways. In one of the modern tales the tiger collects the bones of his friend, the cow, and from her ashes spring two bamboos, which when cut give blood, and are found to be two boys of exquisite grace and beauty.[3] So in Grimm's tale of "One Eye, Two Eyes, and Three Eyes," the tree grows from the buried entrails of the goat. In another of Somadeva's stories the heroine drops a tear on the Jambu flower and a fruit grew, within which a maiden was produced.[4] The incident of the tree which grows on the mother's grave and protects her helpless children is the common property of folk-lore. Again, we have the heavenly

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 174; ii. 181, 592, 286.
[2] Ibid., ii. 270.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 123; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 429.
[4] Ibid., ii. 142.

fruit which was given by the grateful monkey, and freed him who ate it from old age and disease, like the tree in Aelian which makes an old man become younger and younger until he reaches the antenatal stage of non-existence.[1]

We have many instances of trees which talk. The mango tree shows the hero how the magic bird is to be cut out of it; the heroine is blessed and aided by the plantain tree, cotton tree, and sweet basil; she is rewarded by a plum and fig tree for services rendered to them.[2] In one of the Kashmîr tales the tree informs the hero of the safety of his wife. So, in Grimm's tale of the "Lucky Spinner," the tree speaks when the man is about to cut it down.[3]

In one of the stories, as a link between tree and serpent worship, the great palace of the snake king is situated under a solitary Asoka tree in the Vindhyan forest. In the same collection we meet continually instances of tree worship. The Brâhman Somadatta worships a great Asvattha, or fig tree, by walking round it so as to keep it on his right, bowing and making an oblation; Mrigankadatta takes refuge in a tree sacred to Ganesa; and Naravâhana-datta comes to a sandal tree surrounded with a platform made of precious jewels, up which he climbs by means of ladders and adores it.[4]

We have a long series of legends by which certain famous trees are supposed to have been produced from the tooth twig of some saint. The famous hawthorn of Glastonbury was supposed to be sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, who having fixed it in the ground on Christmas Day, it took root immediately, put forth leaves, and the next day was covered with milk-white blossoms.[5] Tra ditions of the Dantadhâvana or tooth-brush tree of Buddha still exist at Gonda; another at Ludhiâna is attributed to Abdul Qâdir Jilâni; there is a Buddha tree at Saketa, and

[1] Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 596.
[2] Temple, "Wide-awake Stories," 413.
[3] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 184; Grimm, *loc. cit.*, ii. 428.
[4] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 153; ii. 387, 460.
[5] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 467.

the great Banyan tree at Broach was similarly produced by Kabîr. So, the Santâls believe that good men turn into fruit-trees.[1]

Next come the numerous sacred groves scattered all over the country. These, as we have seen, are very often regarded as a survival from the primeval jungle, where the forest spirits have taken refuge. The idea is common both to the Aryan as well as to the Drâvidian races, from the latter of whom it was possibly derived.

Thus, among the jungle races we find that there are many groves, known as Sarna, in which the Cheros and Kharwârs offer triennial sacrifices of a buffalo or other animal. The Kisâns have sacred groves, called Sâ. The Mundâri Kols keep "a fragment of the original forest, the trees in which have been for ages carefully protected, left when the clearance was first made, lest the sylvan gods of the place, disgusted at the wholesale felling of the trees which protected them, should abandon the locality. Even now if a tree is destroyed in the sacred grove, the gods evince their displeasure by withholding seasonable rain." This idea of the influence of cutting trees on weather has been illustrated by Mr. Frazer from the usages of other races.[2] So, among the Khândhs, "that timber may never be wanting, in case of accidents from fire or from enemies, a considerable grove, generally of Sâl, is uniformly dedicated by every village to the forest god, whose favour is ever and anon sought by the sacrifice of birds, hogs, and sheep, with the usual accompaniments of rice and an addled egg. The consecrated grove is religiously preserved, the trees being occasionally pruned, but not a twig cut for use without the formal consent of the village and the formal propitiation of the god."[3] Among the Kols, in these groves the tutelary deities of the village are supposed to sojourn when attending to the wants of their votaries.[4] In the Central Provinces

[1] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 304; "North Indian Notes and ueries," i. 4, 37; "Bombay Gazetteer," ii. 355.
[2] "Golden Bough," i. 61.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 112.
[4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 129, 132, 141, 186, 188.

the Badiyas worship the manes of their ancestors in a grove of Sâj trees.[1] In Berâr the wood of the Pathrot forests is believed to be dedicated to a neighbouring temple, and no one will cut or buy it; and in other places in the same province the sacred groves are so carefully preserved, that during the annual festivals held in them it is the custom to collect and burn solemnly all dead and fallen branches and trees.[2]

Among the higher races the same feelings attach to the holy groves of Mathura, each of which has appropriated one of the legends of the Krishna myth. Thus, there is a particularly sacred grove at Bhadanwâra, and it is believed that any one violating the sanctity of the place by telling a lie within its precincts will be stricken with leprosy. In another at Hasanpur Bara the trees are under the protection of the curse of a Faqîr, and in many places people object to having toddy collected from the palm trees, because it necessitates cutting their necks.[3] In the Northern Hills the Sâl and bamboos at Barmdeo are never cut, as they are sacred to the local Devî.[4] In Kulu, "near the village were a number of cypresses, much decayed, and many quite dead. Some of my people had begun to strip off their dry branches for fuel, when one of the conductors of our caravan came to me in great agitation, and implored me to command them to desist. The trees, he said, were sacred to the deities of the elements, who would be sure to revenge any injury done to them by visiting the neighbourhood with heavy and untimely snow."[5]

In a village in Lucknow, noticeable among the trees is a "single mango tree, of fine growth and comely shape. It is the survivor of some old grove, which the owner, through straitened circumstances, has reluctantly cut down. He called it Jâk, or Sakhiya, the witness of the place where the old grove stood."[6] Jâk is, as we have seen, the Corn

[1] Hislop, "Papers," 20.
[2] "Berâr Gazetteer," 29, 31.
[3] Growse, "Mathura," 70, 76 sqq., 83, 420, 470, 458.
[4] "Himâlayan Gazetteer," iii. 47.
[5] Moorcroft, "Travels," i. 211.
[6] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 16.

spirit. The preservation of these little patches of the primeval jungle, with a view to conciliate the sylvan spirits of the place, is exactly analogous to what is known in Scotland as the "Gudeman's Croft," "Cloutie's Croft," or "Gudeman's Field." Often in Northern India little patches are left uncultivated in the corners of fields as a refuge for the spirits, as in North Scotland many farmers leave a corner of the field untilled, and say it is for the "Aul Man," or the Devil.[1]

Some trees are, again, considered to be mystically connected with the fortunes of people and places. Thus, the Chilbil tree at Gonda, which, like others which have already been mentioned, sprouted from the tooth-twig of a saint, was supposed to be mysteriously connected with the fate of the last of the Gonda Râjas. His kingdom was to last until the day a monkey sat on the tree, and this, it is said, happened on the morning when the Mutiny broke out which ended in the ruin of the dynasty.[2] In the same way the moving wood of Dunsinane was fateful to the fortunes of Macbeth.

We have already referred to some of the regular tree sprites, like the Churel, Râkshasa, and Bansaptî Mâ. They are, like Kliddo, the North British sprite, small and delicate at first, but rapidly shooting into the clouds, while everything it overshadows is thrown into confusion.[3]

How sprites come to inhabit trees is well shown in an instance given from Bombay by Mr. Campbell. "In the Dakkhin, when a man is worried by a spirit, he gives it a tree to live in. The patient, or one of his relations, goes to a seer and brings the seer to his house, frankincense is burnt, and the sick man's spirit comes into the seer's body. The people ask the spirit in the seer why the man is sick.

[1] Conway, "Demonology," i. 315 sq.; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 309; Sir W. Scott, "Letters on Demonology," 79; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 116, 179; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 278.

[2] "Oudh Gazetteer," i. 566; Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 304. See instances collected by Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 35 sqq.

[3] Henderson, *loc. cit.*, 273.

He says, 'The ghost of the man you killed has come back, and is troubling you.' Then they say, 'What is to be done?' The spirit says, 'Put him in a place in his or in your land.' The people say, 'How can we put him?' The spirit says, 'Take a cock, five cocoanuts, rice, and red lead, and fill a bamboo basket with them next Sunday evening, and by waving the basket round the head of the patient, take the ghost out of the patient.' When Sunday afternoon comes they call the exorcist. If the ghost has not haunted the sick man for a week, it is held that the man was worried by that ghost, who is now content with the proposed arrangement. If the patient is still sick, it is held that it cannot be that ghost, but it must be another ghost, perhaps a god who troubles him.

"The seer is again called, and his familiar spirit comes into him. They set the sick man opposite him, and the seer throws rice on the sick man, and the ghost comes into the patient's body and begins to speak. The seer asks him, 'Are you going or not?' The ghost replies, 'I will go if you give me a cock, a fowl, a cocoanut, red lead, and rice.' They then bring the articles and show them to the spirit. The spirit sees the articles, and says, 'Where is the cocoanut?' or, 'Where is the rice?' They add what he says, and ask, 'Is it right?' 'Yes, it is right,' replies the spirit. 'If we drive you out of Bâpu, will you come out?' ask the people. 'I will come out,' replies the ghost. The people then say, 'Will you never come back?' 'I will never return,' replies the ghost. 'If you ever return,' says the seer's spirit, 'I will put you in a tanner's well, sink you, and ruin you.' 'I will,' says the spirit, 'never come back, if you take these things to the Pîpal tree in my field. You must never hurt the Pîpal. If you hurt the Pîpal, I will come and worry you.'

"Then the friends of the patient make the cooked rice in a ball, and work a little hollow in the top of the ball. They sprinkle the ball with red powder, and in the hollow put a piece of a plantain leaf, and on the leaf put oil, and a wick, which they light. Then the Gâdi, or flesh-eating priest,

brings the goat in front of the sick man, sprinkles the goat s head with red powder and flowers, and says to the spirit, 'This is for you; take it.' He then passes three fowls three times from the head to the foot of the sick man, and then from the head lowers all the other articles. The Gâdi, or Mhâr, and some friends of the patient start for the place named by the spirit. When the party leave, the sick man is taken into the house and set close to the threshold. They put water on his eyes, and filling a pot with water, throw it outside where the articles were, and inside and outside scatter cowdung ashes, saying, 'If you come in you will have the curse of Râma and Lakshmana.' When the Gâdi and the party reach their destination, the Gâdi tells the party to bring a stone the size of a cocoanut. When the stone is brought, the Gâdi washes it and puts it to the root of the tree and sets about it small stones. On the tree and on the middle stone he puts red lead, red powder, and frankincense. The people then tell the spirit to stay there, and promise to give him a cocoanut every year if he does them no harm. They then kill the goat and the fowls, and, letting the blood fall in front of the stone, offer the heart and liver to the spirit, and then return home." [1]

From ceremonies like these, in which a malignant spirit is entombed in a tree and its surrounding stones, the transition to the general belief in tree sprites is easy. The use of the various articles to scare spirits will be understood from what has been already said on that subject.

## THE KARAM TREE.

Passing on to trees which are considered specially sacred, we find a good example in the Karam (*Neuclea parvifolia*), which is revered by the Kharwars, Mânjhis, and some of the other allied Drâvidian races of the Vindhyan and Kaimûr ranges.

In Shâhâbâd, their great festival is the worship of the sacred tree. "Commenced early in the bright portion of

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 221 sq.

the month Bhâdon (August—September), it continues for fifteen days. It marks the gladness with which people wind up their agricultural operations all over the world. The festivities begin with a fast during the day. In the evening the young men of the village only proceed in a gay circle to the forest. A leafy branch of the Karam is selected, cut, and daubed with red lead and butter. Brought in due state, it is planted in the yard in front of the house, and is decorated with wreaths of wild flowers, such as autumn yields to the Hill men with a bountiful hand. The homely ritual of the Kharwâr then follows, and is finished with the offering of corn and molasses. The worship over, the head of the village community serves the men with a suitable feast. But the great rejoicing of the season is reserved for a later hour. After dinner the men and women appear in their gala dress, and range themselves in two opposite rows. The Mândar, or national drum of the aborigines, is then struck, and the dance commences with a movement forward, until the men and women draw close. Once face to face, a gradual movement towards the right is commenced, and the men and women advance in a slow but merry circle, which takes about an hour to describe.

"Under the influence of the example of the Hindus, the practice of a national dance in which women take a prominent part is already on the decline. When indulged in, it is done with an amount of privacy, closed to the public, but open to the members of the race only. It is difficult, however, to explain why the Karam tree should be so greatly adored by the Kharwârs. It is an insignificant tree, with small leaves, which hardly affords shelter or shade, and possesses no title to be considered superior to others in its native forest. Nor in the religious belief of the Kharwârs have we been able to trace any classic tale connected with the growth of the Karam grove, similar to that of the peaceful olive of old, or aromatic laurel. One important, though the last incident of the Karam worship is the appearance of the demon to the Kharwâr village men.

Generally at the conclusion of the dance the demon takes possession of a Kharwâr, who commences to talk, tremble, and jump, and ultimately climbs up the branch of the Karam and begins to eat the leaves. Consultation about the fortunes of the year then takes place, and when the demon has foretold them the festivities are concluded."[1]

This account omits two important points which enable us to explain the meaning of the rite. The first is that when the festivities are over the branch of the Karam tree is taken and thrown into a stream or tank. This can hardly, on the analogy of similar practices to which reference has been already made, be anything but a charm to produce seasonable rain. Another is that sprigs of barley grown in a special way, as at the Upper India festival of the Jayî, which will be discussed later on, are offered to the tree. This must be an invocation to the deity of the tree to prosper the growth of the autumn rice, which is just at this time being planted out.

I have seen the Karama danced by the Mânjhis, a Drâvidian tribe in Mirzapur, closely allied to the Kharwârs. The people there seem to affect no secrecy about it, and are quite ready to come and dance before Europeans for a small gratuity. The men expect to receive a little native liquor between the acts, but the ladies of the ballet will accept only a light supper of coarse sugar. The troupe consists of about a dozen men and the same number of women. The sexes stand in rows opposite to each other, the women clinging together, each with her arms clasped round her neighbour's waist. One man carrying the sacred Mândar drum, beats it and leads the ballet, hopping about in a curious way on one leg alternately. The two lines advance and retreat, the women bowing low all the time, with their heads bending towards the ground, and joining occasionally in the refrain. Most of the songs are apparently modern, bearing on the adventures of Râma, Lakshmana, and Sîtâ; some are love songs, many of which are, as might have been expected, rude and indecent. The whole scene is a curious picture of

[1] "Calcutta Review," lxix. 364 sq.

genuine aboriginal life. At the regular autumn festival the ceremony degenerates into regular saturnalia, and is, if common rumour be trusted, accompanied by an absolute abandonment of decency and self-respect which culminates in the most unrestrained debauchery.

The modern explanation of the dance is embodied in a folk-tale which turns on the verbal confusion between Karam, the name of the tree, and the Sanskrit Karma, meaning "good works." It is, of course, comparatively modern, and quite useless as a means for ascertaining the real basis of the custom, which is probably a means of propitiating the tree god to grant favourable weather.

## THE FIG TREE.

Among the sacred trees the various varieties of the fig hold a conspicuous place. Many ideas have probably united in securing reverence for them. Thus the Banyan with its numerous stems may fitly be regarded as the home of gods or spirits. Others are valued as a source of food, or because they possess juices valued as drink or medicine.

Such is the Umbar, the Udambara of the Sanskrit writers, which is known as Kshîra Vriksha or "milk tree," and Hemadugha or "golden juiced," the Ficus glomerata of botanists, from the succulent roots of which water can be found in times of drought. The juice has, in popular belief, many valuable properties. A decoction of it is useful for bile, melancholy, and fainting; it prevents abortion and increases the mother's milk.[1] According to the old ritual, of its wood is made the seat of the father god Vivasvat, which is specially worshipped at the close of the Soma sacrifice; the throne on which Soma is placed is made of it, and so is the staff given by the Adhvaryu to the sacrificer at the initiation rite, and the staff of the Vaisya student.

So with the Pîpal (*Ficus religiosa*), which is connected with old temples, as it forces its roots into the crumbling masonry, grows to a great age, and, like the poplar, moves its leaves at

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 237.

the slightest breath of wind. The English tradition about the aspen is that since its wood was used to make the Cross it ever trembles with shame. The Pippala or Asvattha is said by some to be the abode of Brahma, and is sometimes invested with the sacred thread by the regular Upanâyana rite. Others say that in it abide Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, but specially Vishnu in his incarnation as Krishna. Others, again, connect it with Bâsdeo or Vasudeva, the father of Krishna.

The Vata or Nyagrodha (*Ficus Indica*) was, according to the ancient ritual, possessed of many virtues, and the king was directed to drink its juice instead of that of the Soma.[1] The famous Allahâbâd fig tree is mentioned in the Râmâyana and in the Uttara Râma Charitra. Râma, Sîtâ and Lakshmana are said to have rested beneath its branches. Another legend tells how the Rishi Mârkandeya had the presumption to ask Nârâyana to show him a specimen of his delusive power. The god in answer to his prayer drowned the whole world in a sudden flood, and only the Akshaya Vata or imperishable Banyan tree raised its head above the waters, with a little child seated on its topmost bough, that put out its head and saved the terrified saint just as he was on the point of drowning. The Buddhist pilgrim, Hwen Thsang, says that in his time before the principal room of the temple there was a tree with wide-spreading branches, which was said to be the dwelling of a man-eating demon. The tree was surrounded with human bones, the remains of pilgrims who had offered themselves at the temple, a custom which had been observed from time immemorial. General Cunningham identifies this tree with the Akshaya Vata, which is still an object of worship. The well-known Banyan tree of Ceylon is said to be descended from it.[2]

It was under the Bodhi tree at Gaya that the Buddha obtained enlightenment. The great sacred Banyan tree of the Himâlaya is said to have reached from Badarinâth to

[1] Haug, "Aitareya Brâhmanam," ii. 486 sq.

[2] Cunningham, "Bhilsa Topes," 24; "Archæological Reports," i. 5 sq.; Ferguson, "Eastern Architecture," 69; Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 127.

Nand Prayâg, a distance of eighty miles.[1] In Bombay women worship the Banyan tree on the fifteenth of the month of Jeth in honour of Savitrî, the pious wife of Satyavan, who when her husband was cutting a Banyan tree was struck by the axe and killed. Yama appeared and claimed her husband, but at last he was overcome by the devotion of Savitrî and restored her husband to her.[2]

Of the Gûlar (*Ficus glomerata*) it is believed that on the night of the Divâlî the gods assemble to pluck its flowers; hence no one has ever seen the tree in blossom. It is unlucky to grow a Gûlar tree near the house, as it causes the death of sons in the family.

High-caste Hindu women worship the Pîpal tree in the form of Vasudeva on the Amâvasya or fifteenth day of the month, when it falls on Monday. They pour water at its roots, smear the trunk with red lead and ground sandal-wood, and walk round it one hundred and eight times in the course of the sun, putting at each circuit a copper coin, a sweetmeat, or a Brâhmanical cord at the root, all of which are the perquisite of beggars. An old woman then recites the tale of the Râja Nikunjali and his queen Satyavratî, who won her husband by her devotion to the sacred tree. Hence devotion to it is supposed to promote wedded happiness.

In Râjputana the Pípal and Banyan are worshipped by women on the 29th day of Baisâkh (April—May) to preserve them from widowhood.[3] The Pîpal is invoked at the rite of investiture with the sacred thread at marriages and at the foundation-laying of houses. Vows are made under its shade for the boon of male offspring, and pious women veil their faces when they pass it. Many, as they revolve round it, twist a string of soft cotton round the trunk. The vessel of water for the comfort of the departing soul on its way to the land of the dead is hung from its branches, and beneath it are placed the rough stones which form the shrine of the village godling. Its wood is used in parts of

[1] "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 783. [2] Campbell, "Notes," 238
[3] Tod, "Annals," i. 611.

the Aranî, or sacred fire-drill, and for the spoons with which butter is poured on the holy fire. When its branches are attacked by the lac insect, a branch on which they have settled is taken to the Ganges at Allahâbâd and consigned to the Ganges. This, it is believed, saves the tree from further injury.

The tree should be touched only on Sunday, when Lakshmî, the goddess of wealth, abides in it; on every other day of the week, poverty and misfortune take up their quarters in it. The son of a deceased parent should pour three hundred and sixty brass vessels of water round its root to ensure the repose of the dead man. Hindus on Sunday after bathing pour a vessel of water at its root and walk round it four times. Milk and sugar are sometimes mixed with the water to intensify the charm. When the new moon falls on Monday, pious Hindus walk one hundred and eight times round it and wind cotton threads about the trunk. In rich Hindu families small silver models of the tree answer the same purpose. When a statement is made on oath, the witness takes one of the leaves in his hand and invokes the gods above him to crush him, as he crushes the leaf, if he is guilty of falsehood.

Though Sir Monier-Williams gives currency to it, it may be suspected that the story of the Banyas who objected to Pîpal trees being planted in their bâzâr, as they could not carry on their roguery under the shade of the holy tree, has been invented for the delectation of the confiding European tourist. As a matter of fact you will often see merchants plant the tree in the immediate neighbourhood of their shops. It is needless to say that this regard for the Pîpal extends through Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Sumatra, and Java.[1]

## THE SÂL.

The Sâl or Sâkhu is also a holy tree. It is held in much respect by the jungle races, who consider it the abode of spirits and erect their shrines under its shade. The Bâgdis

[1] See instances collected by Wake, "Serpent Worship," 18.

and Bauris of Bengal are married in an arbour made of the branches of the Sâl (*Shorea robusta*) after they have been first married to a Mahua tree (*Bassia latifolia*). Patches of this tree are often reserved as fragments of the primitive jungle, of which it must have constituted an important part.

## THE SHÎSHAM.

The Shîsham or Sîson, the Sinsapa of the Sanskrit writers, is in the tales of Somadeva the haunt of the Vetâla.[1]

## THE JAND.

In the Panjâb the Jand tree (*Prosopis spicigera*) is very generally reverenced, more especially in those parts where it forms a chief feature in the larger flora of the great arid grazing tracts. It is commonly selected to mark the abode or shelter the shrine of some deity. It is to it that, as a rule, rags are dedicated as offerings, and it is employed in the marriage ceremonies of many tribes. Most Khatris and Brâhmans perform rites to it, especially at festivals connected with domestic occurrences. A custom prevails in some families of never putting home-made clothes upon the children, but of begging them from friends. This is, as we have already seen, done with the view of avoiding the Evil Eye. The ceremony of putting on these clothes is usually performed when the child is three years of age. It is taken to the Jand tree, from which a bough is cut with a sickle and planted at the root of the tree as a propitiation of the indwelling spirit. The Swâstika symbol is made before it with the rice, flour, and sugar brought as an offering to the tree. Nine threads from the Mauli, or string used by women to tie up their back hair, are then taken out and cut into lengths, one of which is tied round the tree with the knot characteristic of Siva or Krishna, and another round a piece of dried molasses, which is placed on the Swâstika. Mantras or spells are repeated and the sugar and rice are distri-

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 293.

buted among the women and children; for no male adult, except the officiating Brâhman, attends the ceremony. The Brâhman then dresses the child in the new clothes, on which he impresses the mark of his hand in saffron, and girds the child's loins with a hair string, on which is tied the bag or purse containing the Brâhman's fee. The hair string has in front a triangular piece of red silk, which, as we have already noticed, is one of the most familiar forms of amulet intended to repel the influence of evil spirits. Similarly at marriages, they perform the ceremony of cutting off and burning a small branch of the tree, and offerings are made to it by the relations of persons suffering from small-pox.[1]

## THE AONLA.

The Aonla (*Emblica officinalis*) is another sacred tree. It is considered propitious and chaste, and is worshipped in the month of Kârttik (December) by Brâhmans being fed under it, hair strings (*mauli*) being tied round it, and seven circumambulations made in the course of the sun. The eleventh of the month Phâlgun (February) is sacred to it, and on this occasion libations are poured at the foot of the tree, a string of red or yellow colour is bound round the trunk, prayers are offered to it for the fruitfulness of women, animals, and crops, and the ceremony concludes with a reverential inclination to the sacred tree.[2]

## THE MAHUA.

The Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*), which so admirably combines beauty with utility, and is one of the main sources whence the jungle tribes derive their food and intoxicants, is held in the highest respect by the people of the Central Indian Highlands. It is the marriage tree of the Kurmis, Lohârs, Mahilis, Mundas, and Santâls of Bengal. Many of the

[1] Ibbetson, "Panjâb Ethnography," 118; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 55; O'Brien, "Multâni Glossary," 82.

[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 74; Elliot, "Supplementary Glossary," 26.

Drâvidian races, such as the Bhuiyas, adore it, and a branch is placed in the hands of the bride and bridegroom during the marriage ceremony. They also revolve round a bough of the tree planted in the ground by the Baiga or aboriginal priest. Some of the semi-Hinduized Bengal Gonds have the remarkable custom of tying the corpses of adult males by a cord to the Mahua tree, in an upright position, previous to burial. It is also the rule with them that all adult males go to the forest and clear a space round an Âsan tree (*Terminalia alata tormentosa*), where they make an altar and present offerings to the tribal godling, Bara Deo, after which they have a general picnic.[1]

## THE COTTON TREE.

The Salmali or Semal (*Bombax heptaphyllum*) is likewise sacred, an idea perhaps derived from its weird appearance and the value of its fibre, which was largely used by the primitive races of the jungle. It gave its name to one of the seven Dvípas or great divisions of the known continent, and to a special hell, in which the wicked are tortured with the Kûta Salmali, or thorny rod of this tree. In the folk-tales a hollow cotton tree is the refuge of the heroine.[2] The posts of the marriage pavilion and stake round which the bride and bridegroom revolve are very commonly made of its wood among the Kols and allied Drâvidian tribes, as are also the parrot totem emblems used at marriages by the Kharwârs and many menial castes. The Bânsphors, a branch of the great Dom race in the North-Western Provinces, fix up a branch of the Gûlar and Semal in the marriage shed. "Among the wild tribes it is considered the favourite seat of gods still more terrible than those of the Pîpal, because their superintendence is confined to the neighbourhood, and having their attention less occupied, they can venture to make a more minute scrutiny into the

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 148, 281, 283; Rousselet, "India and its Native Princes," 369 sq.

[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 162.

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[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 148, 281, 283; Rousselet, "India and its Native Princes," 369 sq.

[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 162.

conduct of the people immediately around them. The Pîpal is occupied by one or two of the Hindus triad, the gods of creation, preservation, and destruction, who have the affairs of the universe to look after, but the cotton and other trees are occupied by some minor deities, who are vested with a local superintendence over the affairs of a district, or perhaps of a single village."[1]

## THE NÎM.

The Nimba or Nîm (*Azidirachta Indica*) is sacred in connection with the worship of the godlings of disease, who are supposed to reside in it. In particular it is occupied by Sîtalâ and her six sisters. Hence during the season when epidemics prevail, from the seventh day of the waning moon of Chait to the same date in Asârh, that is during the hot weather, women bathe, dress themselves in fresh clothes, and offer rice, sandal-wood, flowers, and sometimes a burnt offering with incense at the root of the tree.

The Nîm tree is also connected with snake worship, as its leaves repel snakes. In this it resembles the Yggdrassil of Europe, the roots of which were half destroyed by the serpents which nestled among them. The leaves and wood of the ash tree, the modern successor of the mystic tree of Teutonic mythology, are still regarded throughout all Northern Europe as a powerful protective from all manner of snakes and evil worms.[2] In Cornwall no kind of snake is ever found near the ashen tree, and a branch of it will prevent a snake from coming near a person.[3] Nîm leaves are, it may be noted, useless as a snake scarer unless they are fresh.[4]

The leaves are also used throughout Northern India as a means of avoiding the death pollution, or rather as a mode of driving off the spirit which accompanies the mourners

[1] Sleeman, "Rambles and Recollections," ii. 18; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 225.
[2] "Quarterly Review," cxiv. 226; "Folk-lore," iii. 88.
[3] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 420.
[4] Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," i. 473.

from the cremation ground. Hence after the funeral they chew the leaves and some water is sprinkled over them with a branch of the tree. "So great is the power of the Nîm over spirits and spirit disease, that in Bombay, when a woman is delivered of a child, Nîm leaves and cow's urine are, as a rule, kept at the entrance of the lying-in room, in order that the child and its mother may not be affected by an evil spirit, and on their New Year's Day it is considered essential for every Hindu to worship the Nîm tree and to eat its leaves mixed with pepper and sugar, that he may not suffer from any sickness or disease during the year. In practice very few worship the tree, but its leaves are generally eaten by most of them. Among the Chitpâwan Brâhmans, a pot filled with cow's urine is set at the door of the lying-in room with a Nîm branch in it, and anyone coming in must dip the branch in the urine and with it sprinkle his feet. Among Govardhan Brâhmans of Pûna, when a child is born, Nîm leaves are hung at the front and back doors of the house. In Ahmadnagar, when a person is bitten by a snake, he is taken to Bhairoba's temple, crushed Nîm leaves mixed with chillies are given him to eat, and Nîm leaves waved round his head. Among the Nâmdeo Shimpis of Ahmadnagar each of the mourners carries from the pyre a twig of the Nîm tree, and the Kanphatas of Cutch get the cartilage of their ears slit, and in the slit a Nîm stick is stuck, the wound being cured by a dressing of Nîm oil."[1]

We have already found this tree connected with Sun worship, as in the case of the Nimbârak Vaishnavas, as well as with that of Sîtalâ, the goddess of small-pox. Among the wilder tribes it is also revered. The Jogis, a criminal tribe in Madras, reverence it and brand their dogs with a representation of the tree.[2] The Banjâras, or wandering carriers, use a branch of the tree as a test of continence. The jealous husband throws it on the ground and says, "If thou be a true woman, lift that Nîm branch."

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 234.
[2] Mullaly, "Notes on Madras Criminal Tribes," 20.

The Doms, or vagrant sweepers of the Eastern District of the North-Western Provinces, hold the Nîm tree sacred to Kâlî or Sîtalâ, and the Kurmis dedicate it to Kâlî Bhavânî, and worship this tree and the Pîpal under which the image of Devî is placed.[1]

## THE COCOANUT.

The cocoanut is considered one of the most sacred fruits, and is called Srîphala, or the fruit of Srî, the goddess of prosperity. It is the symbol of fertility, and all through Upper India is kept on shrines and presented by the priests to women who desire children. One of the main causes of the respect paid to it seems to be its resemblance to a human head, and hence it is often used as a type of an actual human sacrifice. It is also revered for its uses as food and a source of intoxicating liquor. But it is not a native of Northern India, and is naturally more revered in its home along the western coast. In Gujarât and Kanara it represents the house spirit, and is worshipped as a family god. The Konkan Kunbis put up and worship a cocoanut for each of their relations who dies, and before beginning to cut the rice, break a cocoanut and distribute it among the reapers. The Prabhus, at every place where three roads meet, wave a cocoanut round the face of the bridegroom, and break it into pieces to repel evil influences. The Musalmâns of the Dakkhin cut a cocoanut and lime into pieces and throw them over the head of the bridegroom to scare evil spirits. Among some classes of ascetics the skull is broken at the time of cremation with a cocoanut in order to allow the ghost to escape. In Western India, at the close of the rains, cocoanuts are thrown in to pacify the sea. Its place as a substitute for a human sacrifice in Northern India seems to have been taken by the pumpkin, which is used in much the same way.

## THE MIMOSA.

The Khair, or Mimosa (*Acacia catechu*) seems to owe most

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 38.

of the estimation in which it is held to its use in producing the sacred fire. It forms, on account of its hardness, the base of the Araṇî or sacred fire-drill, and in it the wedge of the softer Pîpal wood works and fire is produced by friction. The Yûpa or sacrificial post to which the victim was tied for the sacrifice was often made of this wood. In the great horse sacrifice of the Râmâyana, twenty-one of these posts were erected, six made of Vilva (*Agle marmelos*), six of Khadira or Acacia, six of Palâsa (*Butea frondosa*), one of Udumbara (*Ficus glomerata*), Sleshmataka (*Cordia myxa*), and one of Devadru, the Deodâr pine tree.

Of the Khair tree Bishop Heber thus writes in his Journal:[1] "As I returned home I passed a fine tree of the Mimosa, with leaves at a little distance so much resembling those of the mountain ash, that I was for a moment deceived, and asked if it did not bear fruit. He answered, 'No; but it was a very noble tree, being called the "Imperial tree," for its excellent qualities. That it slept all night, and was alive all day, withdrawing its leaves if any one attempted to touch them. Above all, however, it was useful as a preservative against magic; a sprig worn in the turban, or suspended over the bed, was a perfect security against all spells, Evil Eye, etc., insomuch that the most formidable wizard would not, if he could help it, approach its shade. One indeed, they said, who was very renowned for his power (like Lorrinite of Kehama) of killing plants and drying up their sap with a look, had come to this very tree and gazed upon it intently; 'but,' said the old man, who told me this with an air of triumph, 'look as he might, he could do the tree no harm,' a fact of which I made no question. I was amused and surprised to find the superstition, which in England and Scotland attaches to the rowan tree, here applied to a tree of nearly similar form."

This superstition regarding the rowan tree and the elder is familiar in European folk-lore. In Ireland the roots of the elder and those of an apple tree which bears red apples, boiled together and drunk fasting, expel evil

[1] i. 287.

spirits. In connection with this idea that the mimosa sleeps at night, pious Hindus prefer not to eat betel leaves after sunset, as catechu forms part of the ingredients with which they are prepared.

## THE PLANTAIN.

The plantain is also sacred, probably on account of the value of its fruit. The leaves are hung on the marriage booth, and a branch is placed near the pole or sacred fire round which the bride and bridegroom revolve. In Madras, when premature delivery takes place, the child is laid on a plantain leaf smeared with oil, the leaf is changed daily, and the baby is thus treated for the period which is less than the normal time of delivery. In Bengal, in consecrating an image of Durgâ, a plantain tree is brought in and bathed. It is clothed as a woman with Bel apples representing the breasts; nine sorts of leaves smeared with red paint are hung round the breast and it is worshipped.[1] The leaves are also used as a remedy for wounds and ulcers, a practice which prevailed in the time of Shakespeare. In "Romeo and Juliet" Benvolio says:—

> "Take thou some new infection to thine eye,
> And the rank poison of the old will die."

To which Romeo answers:—

> "Your plantain leaf is excellent for that."
> "For what, I pray thee?"
> "For your broken skin."

In the folk-tales the deserted wife sweeps the ground round a plantain tree and it gives her a blessing.[2]

## THE POMEGRANATE.

So with the pomegranate, which among the Pârsis of Bombay is held in high respect. Its twigs were used to make the sacred broom, its seeds, in order to scare evil

[1] Ward, "Hindus," ii. 13, quoted by Campbell, "Notes," 229.
[2] Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 280.

spirits, were thrown over the child when it was girt with the sacred thread, and its juice was squeezed into the mouth of the dying.[1] In its fruit Anâr Shâhzâdî, the Princess Pomegranate, commonly lies hidden. But it is in Upper India considered unlucky to have such a tree in the house, as it is envious and cannot bear that any one should be lovelier than itself.[2]

## THE TAMARIND.

The Orâons of Bengal revere the tamarind and bury their dead under its shade.[3] One special rite among the Drâvidian races is the Imlî ghontnâ or "the grinding of the tamarind," when the mother of the bridegroom grinds on the family curry stone some pods of the tamarind. The tree was a special favourite with the early Musalmân conquerors, and the finest specimens of it will be found in their cemeteries and near their original settlements.

## THE SIRAS.

In the Panjâb the leaves of the Siras (*Acàcia sirisa*) are a powerful charm. In many villages in Upper India they will be seen hung up on the rope crossing the village cattle path, when epidemics prevail among men or animals.[4] In this case the effect of the charm is enhanced by adding to them a tile covered with some hocus-pocus formula, written by a Faqîr, and rude models of a pair of wooden sandals, a mud rake, a plough-share and other agricultural implements which are considered effectual to scare the demon which brings the plague.

## THE MANGO.

The Mango is used in much the same way: It is, as we shall see, used in making the aspersion at rural ceremonies.

[1] Campbell, *loc. cit.*, 229.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 207.
[3] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 189.
[4] "Sirsa Settlement Report," 154.

The leaves are hung up at marriages in garlands on the house door, and on the shed in which the rite is performed, and after the wedding is over these are carefully consigned to running water by the bride and bridegroom. It is also used as a charm. Before you see a flower on a mango tree shut your eyes and make some one lead you to a tree in flower. Rub the flowers into your hands, and you thus acquire the power of curing scorpion stings by moving your hand over the place. But this power lasts only for one year, and must be renewed when the season of flowers again returns.

## THE TULASÎ.

The Tulasî or holy basil (*Ocymum sanctum*) is closely connected with the worship of Vishnu. At the last census over eleven hundred persons in the North-Western Provinces recorded themselves as worshippers of the plant. It is known in Sanskrit as Haripriya, or "the beloved of Vishnu," and Bhûtaghni, or "destroyer of demons." It seems to owe the favour with which it is regarded to its aromatic and healing properties. Vishnu, so runs the legend, was fascinated with the beauty of Vrindâ, the wife of Jâlandhara, to redeem him from whose enthralment, the gods applied to Lakshmî, Gaurî, and Swadhâ. Each gave them seed to sow where Vishnu was enchanted. The seeds given by the deities sprang up as the Dhâtrî or Emblica Myrobalan, the Mâlatî or jasmine, and the Tulasî, or basil, and appearing in female form they attracted the admiration of the deity and saved him from the wiles of Vrindâ.[1]

Another legend comes from Bombay.[2] Tulasî was daughter of the Râja Dharmadhwaja, and by her devotions gained the favour of Vishnu, but she married the demon Sankhachûda, who by the virtue of his wife overcame the gods. They appealed to Vishnu, but he could not help them, as the demon was his votary. At last it was resolved that he should personate her husband and gain her love.

[1] Wilson, "Works," iii. 68.

[2] Campbell, "Notes," 248.

When Tulasî was aware of the deception she was about to curse him, but he pacified her by promising to marry her and make her name immortal. He added that those women who married an image of him to the Tulasî on the eleventh day of the month Kârttik would prosper.

The Tulasî is also connected with Sîtâ and Rukminî, and the prayer to her is: "I adore that Tulasî, in whose roots are all the places of pilgrimage, in whose centre are all the deities, and in whose upper branches are all the Vedas." The plant is specially worshipped by women after bathing, and more particularly at the full moon of Kârttik, if the bathing be in the Ganges. The chief ceremony is, however, the marriage of the infant Krishna to the plant, which is carried out by pious people, often at a considerable cost, in accordance with the standard ritual.

## THE PALÂSA.

The Palâsa or Dhâk is sacred, partly on account of its use in producing the sacred fire, and partly because its orange blossoms are used to dye the coloured dust and water thrown about at the Holî festival. It is supposed to be in some way connected with the Soma, and by one account was produced from the feather of the falcon imbued with the Soma. Its trifoliate leaves represent the trident, or the three great gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, or birth, life, and death. The leaves are used to form the platters employed at various feasts and religious rites; the wood in the Yûpa, or sacrificial pole, and in the funeral pyre.

In one respect it resembles the rowan, which is also a sacred tree, but why this is so has been much debated. "Possibly the inaccessible rocks on which the tree is not unfrequently found to grow and the conspicuous colour of its berries may have counted for something, but this falls decidedly short of a solution of the question. One kind of answer that would meet the case, provided it be countenanced by facts, may be briefly indicated, namely, that the berries of the rowan were used in some early period in the brew-

ing of an intoxicating drink, or better still, of the first intoxicating drink known to the Teuto-Aryan Celts."[1] The connection between the Palâsa and the Soma perhaps indicates that this may have been the case. It was again a Vedic custom to drive the cows from their calves by striking them with a rod of a Palâsa tree. In Yorkshire it used to be the custom for "farmers to have whip-stocks of rowan tree wood, and it was held that thus supplied, they were safe against having their draught fixed, or their horses made restive by a witch. If ever a draught came to a standstill, then the nearest witchwood tree was resorted to, and a stick cut to flog the horses on with, to the discomfiture of the malevolent witch who had caused the stoppage." In some parts of Scotland the milkmaid carries a switch of the magical rowan to expel the demon which sometimes enters the cow; and in Germany, striking the cow with this magical wand is believed to render her fertile.[2]

## THE BEL.

The Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) is specially dedicated to Siva, because it has three leaflets in the leaf, and because of its medicinal value. Siva is called Bilvadanda, "he with a staff of the Bel wood," and its leaves are used in his service. Its leaves laid on the Lingam cool and refresh the heated deity. The wood is one of those used for the sacrificial post. Its fruit is called Srîphala, because it is supposed to have been produced from the milk of the goddess Srî.

## THE BAMBOO.

The bamboo is sacred on account of its manifold uses and because among the jungle races fire is produced by the friction of two strips of bamboo. Besides this it contains a sort of manna, known as Bânslochan or Tabashîr, which is

[1] Rhys, "Lectures," 359.
[2] Kelly, "Curiosities," 159; Conway, "Demonology," i. 126; Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 225; Dyer, "Popular Customs," 274; Brand, "Observations," 616.

in high repute as a medicine. The flowering of the bamboo is generally regarded as a sure sign of famine. The bamboo often appears in the folk-tales. Thus in one of the tales of Somadeva,[1] "they asked Sumeru about the origin of the bow, and he said: 'Here is a great and glorious wood of bamboo canes; whatever bamboos are cut from it and thrown into this lake, become great and wonderful bows; and those bows have been acquired by several of the gods, and by Asuras and Gandharvas and distinguished Vidyadhâras.'" In one of the Santâl tales,[2] the bamboo grows from the grave of the murdered girl, and remonstrates when the Jogi goes to cut it, but out of a piece he finally makes a flute of wondrous sweetness. Among the jungle races the bamboo often is used to make the poles of the marriage shed, while the central post is made of the wood of the holy Siddh tree, the *Hardwickia binata*.

In Gujarât,[3] the Turis, to keep off evil spirits, lay two slips of bamboo in the lying-in room. The Prabhus of Pûna at their marriages put bamboo baskets on the heads of the bride, bridegroom, and guests. The Mhârs and Mângs make the married pair stand in bamboo baskets. The Muâsis of Bengal make the wedded pair revolve round a bamboo post. The Birhors worship Darha in the form of a split bamboo; the Kachâris and Gâros worship a bamboo planted in the ground; the Râjmahâl hill-man worships three bamboos with streamers, as Chaunda Gusâîn.[4] The use of the bamboo decorated with a streamer as a perch for the deity is common at all low-caste shrines in Northern India.

## THE SANDAL.

The Sandal, again, in the form of powder or paste is very largely used in all Hindu rites, and in making the marks characteristic of sect or caste. "In Bombay, every evening, the Pârsis burn sandal chips in their houses, as the smell of

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 439.
[2] Campbell, "Santâl Folk-tales," 54. [3] Campbell, "Notes," 239
[4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 109, 220, 234.

sandal is supposed to drive away evil spirits, and the Pûna Ghadsis or musicians say that they are sprung from sandal wood, because it is one of their tribal guardians.[1]"

## THE BIRCH.

The Bhûrja, a species of birch, is also sacred. It, too, is supposed to drive away evil spirits. Its bark, now called Bhojpatra, is used for writing charms, and for other mystic purposes. When a corpse is burnt by low-caste people, when a person dies at the hands of an executioner, when he dies on a bed, or when he is drowned and his body cannot be found, a rite known as Palâśvidhi is performed. An effigy of the deceased is made, in which twigs of the Palâsa tree represent the bones, a cocoanut or Bel fruit the head, pearls or cowry shells the eyes, and a piece of birch bark or the skin of a deer the cuticle. It is then filled up with Urad pulse instead of flesh and blood, and a presiding priest recites a spell to bring life into the image, which is symbolized by putting a lighted lamp close to the head. When the light goes out, life is believed to be extinct and the funeral rites are performed in the regular way, the only exception being that the period of impurity lasts for three, instead of ten days.

## OTHER SACRED TREES.

The number of these trees and plants which scare evil spirits or are invested with other mystic qualities is infinite. We may close the catalogue with the Babûl or Kîkar (*Acacia Arabica*), which when cut pours out a reddish juice. One of these trees, when the Musalmâns tried to cut it near a shrine at Lahore, is said to have poured out drops of blood as a warning. But on the whole it is an unlucky tree, and the resort of evil spirits. If you throw water for thirteen days successively on a Babûl tree, you will get the evil spirits which inhabit it into your power. They tell of a man who

[1] Campbell, *loc. cit.*, 232.

did this near Sahâranpur, who when taken to his cremation, no sooner was the light set to his pyre than he got up and walked home, and is alive to this day. His neighbours naturally look on his proceedings with a certain degree of suspicion. The ghost of a man burnt with this wood will not rest quietly, and any one who rests on a bed made of it is afflicted with evil dreams. An old servant of mine once solemnly remonstrated against the use of such a bed by his master. Such a bed, he remarked, should be only used for a clergyman guest, who by virtue of his profession is naturally protected against such uncanny visitations.

## TREE MARRIAGES.

We now come to discuss the curious custom of marriages to trees. This prevails widely throughout Northern India. Thus, in some parts of Kângra, if a betrothed but as yet unmarried girl can succeed in performing the marriage ceremony with the object of her choice round a fire made in the jungle with certain wild plants, her betrothal is annulled, and this informal marriage is recognized.[1] In the Panjâb a Hindu cannot be legally married a third time. So, if he wishes to take a third wife, he is married to a Babûl tree (*Acacia Arabica*), or to the Akh plant (*Asclepia gigantea*), first, so that the wife he subsequently marries is counted as his fourth, and the evil consequences of marrying a third time are thus avoided.[2] In Bengal, writes Dr. Buchanan,[3] "Premature marriage is considered so necessary to Hindu ideas of prosperity, that even the unfortunate children who are brought up for prostitution are married with all due ceremony to a plantain tree, before the age when they would be defiled by remaining single." In the North-Western Provinces, among some of the higher classes of Brâhmans, if a man happens to lose one or two wives and is anxious to marry a third, the ceremony of his third

[1] Ibbetson, "Panjâb Ethnography," 119.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 42; "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 27.
[3] "Eastern India," iii. 555.

marriage is first gone through with an Akh plant. The family priest takes the intending bridegroom to the fields where there are Akh plants and repeats the marriage formula. This is known as Arka Vivâh, or Akh marriage, and it is believed that the plant itself dies soon after being married. In Oudh, it is very unlucky to marry a couple if the ruling stars of the youth form a more powerful combination than those of the female. The way to get out of the difficulty is to marry the girl first to a Pîpal tree. In the Panjâb, rich people who have no children marry a Brâhman to a Tulasî plant. The pseudo-father of the bride treats the Brâhman ever afterwards as his son-in-law, which, it is needless to say, is a very good thing for the Brâhman.[1] If the birth of a child does not follow this ceremony, they have good reason for apprehending that a messenger from Yama, the god of death, will harass them on their way to the spirit world.

In Bombay, among the Kudva Kunbis of Gujarât, when there are certain difficulties in the marriage of a girl, she is married to a mango or some other fruit tree. Mr. Campbell[2] accounts for this on the principle that a spirit fears trees, especially fruit trees. Among another branch of the same tribe, when a girl is marriageable and a bridegroom cannot be found, the practice is to substitute a bunch of flowers, and the marriage ceremony proceeds. Next day, by which time the flowers have begun to fade, they are thrown into a well, and the bride of yesterday is considered a widow. As a widow can marry at any time without social discredit, the parents find a husband for her at their leisure.[3]

So in Bengal, the Rautiyas before the wedding go through the form of marriage to a mango tree.[4] Among the Mundâri Kols, "the bride and bridegroom are well anointed with turmeric, and wedded, not to each other, but the bride to a Mahua tree, and the groom to a mango, or both to

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 151 sq. [2] "Notes," 461.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," vii. 61.
[4] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 201.

mango trees. They are made to touch the tree with red lead, and then to clasp it, and they are tied to it."[1] Among the Kurmîs, the bridegroom on the wedding morning is first married to a mango tree. He embraces the tree, is for a time tied to it in a peculiar manner with a thread, and he daubs it with red lead. Then the thread is removed from the tree, and is used to attach some of the leaves to the bridegroom's wrist. The bride is similarly wedded to a Mahua tree.[2]

Similarly in the Himâlayas, if anyone desires to marry a third time, whether his other wives are alive or not, he is married to the Akh plant. He builds an altar near the plant, or brings a branch home and plants it near the altar. The regular marriage ceremony is then performed, and a thread is wound ten times round the plant with the recitation of appropriate verses. Four days the plant remains where it was fixed, and on the fifth day the celebrant is entitled to commence the marriage ceremony with his third wife. Similarly, a person is married to an earthen jar, when from some conjunction of the planets the omens are unfavourable, or when, from some bodily or mental defect, no one will marry the boy or girl. The usual ceremonies are gone through, and the neck of the boy or girl is connected by a string with the neck of the vessel, and water is sprinkled over them with a brush made of five leaves.[3]

In Nepâl every Newâr girl is, while a child, married to a Bel fruit, which, after the ceremony, is thrown into some sacred river. When she arrives at puberty a husband is selected for her, but should the marriage prove unpleasant, she can divorce herself by the simple process of placing a betel-nut under her husband's pillow, and walking off. Widows are allowed to re-marry; in fact, a Newâr woman is never a widow, as the Bel fruit to which she first married is supposed to be always in existence.[4]

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 194. [2] Ibid., 319.
[3] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 912.
[4] Wright, "History of Nepâl," 33.

Before considering a possible explanation of this group of customs, we may note other instances of pseudo-marriages. We have, in the first place, instances of the marriage of girls to a god. "In the Gurgâon District, in the Rewâri Tahsîl, at the village of Bâs Doda, a fair is held on the 26th of Chait and the two following days. I was told that formerly girls of the Dhînwar class used to be married to the god at these festivals, and that they always died soon afterwards, but that of late years the practice has been discontinued."[1]

Again, we have some traces of the allied custom of compulsory religious prostitution. It is said that Santâl girls are required to submit to compulsory prostitution once in their lives at Telkûpi Ghât. "It is said that the custom originally arose from the killing of a girl by her parents for incontinence; since when, girls have been permitted to do as they please, and what was once permissive has become compulsory."[2] There is no reference to this in Colonel Dalton's account of the Santâls, and Mr. Beglar's authority is not quite satisfactory. But on the analogy of similar rites in Babylon, as described by Herodotus, it is very likely that such a custom once prevailed. There is some evidence that similar customs once prevailed at the temple of Jaggannâth and other Indian shrines.

We have, again, folk-tale references to the same custom in a tradition of the Vallabhachârya sect of the daughter of a banker, who, by her devotion to him, won the love of the god Krishna in the form of an image. Finally the deity revealed himself, and she went with him to Brindaban and remained with her divine husband till he carried her off to the heaven of Vishnu. This, however, is hardly perhaps more than an example of the mystic union of the god with his worshippers, which forms such a large part of the Vaishnava hagiology, and is familiar in the tales of Krishna and the Gopîs.

There is, again, among children in the neighbourhood of Sahâranpur, a game which may be a survival of some more

[1] "Settlement Report," 38. [2] "Archæological Reports," x. 177.

primitive rite. At the Tîj festival, which occurs in the rainy season, girls dressed in their best go to a tank near the city. After dropping offerings into the water in honour of Khwâja Khizr, they divide into two parties, each of which selects a leader, one of whom is known as the bride and the other a bridegroom. The latter is decorated with a paper crown decked with tinsel. The clothes of the pair are knotted together, and they are made to walk round a Tulasî plant or a Pîpal tree on the banks of the tank, in a mock form of the marriage ritual. Meanwhile each party chaffs the other, saying, "Your bride (or bridegroom) is one-eyed." They return home with merriment of this kind, and when they come to the house the knot tied in the garments of the pair is unloosed.

We have, again, instances of the marriages of, or to animals. In parts of the Panjâb, if a man have lost two or three wives in succession, he gets a woman to catch a bird and adopt it as her daughter. He then marries the bird, and immediately pays over the bride-gift to the woman that adopted his bird-bride, which he divorces. After this he can get himself married to another woman, and she will probably live.[1]

So, there have been many instances of Râjas marrying animals with the customary rites. Some years ago, one of the Gâekwârs of Baroda spent a large sum in marrying some favourite pigeons, and a Râja of Nadiya spent a lâkh of rupees in marrying two monkeys.

Lastly, there are numerous survivals of what can hardly be anything else but tree marriage. Among the Bâwariyas, a vagrant tribe in Sirsa, the bride and bridegroom go outside the village to a Jand tree, which, as we have seen already, is regarded as sacred, move round it seven times, and then cut off a branch with an axe.[2] In a Bhîl marriage, the pair walk round the Salyâra tree, which is placed in the marriage booth, twelve times.[3] We have a similar custom among most of the menial tribes. The Kols make the

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 15.
[2] "Settlement Report," 167.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," iii. 221.

marriage booth of nine bamboo poles, with a bamboo or a branch of the Siddh tree as the central post. As the bridegroom smears the parting of the bride's hair with red lead, he makes a daub of the same substance on the tree. Much the same custom prevails among all the inferior castes. The worship of trees at marriage prevails in Madras, where some Râjas worship at their marriages the fire and the Vahni tree, a twig of which is used as an arrow at the hunting feast at the Navarâtri or Dasahra.[1]

On the whole, it seems probable that this custom of pseudo-marriages may be based on various principles. The popular explanation of the custom is, as we have seen, that it is intended to avoid the curse of widowhood, the tree-husband being always alive; the woman, even if her husband die, can never be a widow, nor can the parents be liable to the contempt which, according to popular Hindu belief, awaits those who keep a girl who has reached maturity unmarried. But when we find the same custom prevailing among races who habitually permit pre-nuptial infidelity, and among whom every marriageable widow is either subjected to the levirate or made over to a stranger, it seems obvious that this cannot be the original explanation of the practice.

Again, according to Mr. Frazer, who has collected numerous examples of the custom, "it is difficult to separate from totemism the custom observed by totem clans in Bengal of marrying the bride and bridegroom to trees before they are married to each other."[2]

But the idea that, as we have seen in one of the cases of tree marriages, the tree itself is supposed to die soon after the ceremony, seems to point to the fact that the marriage may be intended to divert to the tree some evil influence, which would otherwise attach to the wedded pair. We have an instance of a somewhat analogous practice from Bombay. "Among the Konkan Kunbis, when a woman is in labour and cannot get a speedy delivery, some gold ornament from her hair is taken to a Rûî plant (the Dhâk—

[1] Oppert, "Original Inhabitants," 73. [2] "Totemism," 33 sqq.

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*Callotropis gigantea* of Northern India), and after digging at its roots, one of the roots is taken out, and the ornament is buried in its stead. The root is then brought home and put in the hair of the woman in labour. It is supposed that by this means the woman gets speedy delivery. As soon as she is delivered of a child, the root is taken from her hair and brought back to the Rûî plant, and after digging at its root the ornament is taken out and the root placed in its former place."[1] The idea seems to be that the evil influence hindering parturition is thus transferred to the plant. And this may be one explanation of the practice where, as we have seen, a man is married to a bird, or so on, when his former wives have died. The bird acts as the scape-animal, and carries the disease spirit away with it.

Lastly, we have seen instances in which the wedded pair are made to clasp the tree or are tied to it in some special way. There are numerous cases in which women, in order to procure offspring, clasp an idol, like that of Hanumân and one of the other guardian deities. The clasping of the tree at marriage may possibly be a sort of sympathetic magic to bring on the pair the fertility and power of reproduction, of which vegetable life is the well-known symbol. We have the same principle of the wedding of the grove to its well, and every Hindu who goes to the expense of making a tank, does not drink of its waters until he has married the tank to a plantain or some other tree growing on its banks.

## TREE AND SERPENT WORSHIP.

In the story of the king and his son, told in the Baitâl Pachîsi, the king supplicates the sacred tree to give him a son. The request is granted, and the king then implores the tree to make his people happy; the result was that poor wretches, hitherto living in the woods, came forth and concerted measures to seize his kingdom. Rather than shed blood, the old king, his queen, and his son retired to a lofty

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 250.

mountain. There the son finds something white lying under a mimosa tree. On inquiry he learnt that it is a heap of serpents' bones left there by Garuda, who comes daily to feed on serpents. On hearing this, the king goes towards a temple, but is arrested by the cry of a woman, who says: "My son to-day will be eaten by Garuda." She and her people were, in fact, serpents in human shape. The king was moved to pity, and as in the famous legend of Buddha and the tigress, he offered to expose himself to Garuda in the room of her son. This is discovered; Garuda releases the king, and at his request re-animates the serpents to whom the bones belong.[1]

Here we have an example of the combination of tree and serpent worship, and it would be easy to adduce more instances, as has been done by Mr. Ferguson and other writers of his school. But in dealing with this phase of belief much caution is required. As Dr. Tylor observes: "Serpent-worship unfortunately fell years ago into the hands of speculative writers, who mixed it up with occult philosophies, Druidical mysteries, and that portentous nonsense called the Arkite symbolism, till now sober students hear the very name of ophiolatry with a shiver."[2]

It is almost needless to say that snake-worship prevails largely in Northern India. The last census showed in the North-Western Provinces over twenty-five thousand Nâga worshippers; one hundred and twenty-three persons recorded themselves as votaries of Gûga, the snake god. There are also a certain number who worship Sânp Deotâ, or the snake godling, and Ahîran, another deity of the same class, who is worshipped in Sultânpur by daily offerings of red lead, water, and rice. Sokha, said to be the ghost of a Brâhman killed by a snake, has nearly fourteen thousand worshippers. In the Panjâb, again, there are over thirty-five thousand special votaries of the snake godlings, of which the great majority worship Gûga.

[1] Manning, "Ancient India," ii. 330 sq.; Tawney, "Katha Sarit ›âgara," i. 185.
[2] "Primitive Culture," ii. 239.

That the cultus of the snake has been derived from aboriginal beliefs appears tolerably certain. The Hindus of Vedic times looked on the serpent with fear and dislike. It was impersonated as Ahi or Vritra, the snake demon which brings darkness and drives away the kindly rain. The regular snake-worship, as we now find it, was obviously of a later date.

It does not appear difficult to disentangle the ideas on which snake-worship is based. To begin with, the snake is dreaded and revered on account of the mysterious fear which is associated with it, its stealthy habits, its sinuous motion, the cold fixity of its gaze, the protrusion of its forked tongue, the suddenness and deadliness of its attacks. It would be particularly dreaded by women, whose habits of walking barefoot in fields in the early dawn, and groping in dark corners of their huts, render them specially exposed to its malice. The chief basis of the cultus would then be fear, as in the case of the tiger and other beasts of prey.

It would soon be discovered that there were various harmless snakes which would, as house-hunters, come to be identified with the ancestral ghosts as the protectors of houses and goods. The power of controlling and taming the more venomous snakes would then be discovered, and the snake-charmer would come to be regarded as the wisest of mankind, as a wizard, and finally as a priest. We have thus three aspects under which the snake is worshipped by many savage races—as a dreaded enemy, as the protector of home and treasure, as the accompaniment and attribute of wisdom. The village temple would be often in early times a storehouse of treasure, and the snake, respected as its guardian, would finally, as in Kashmîr, be installed there as a god.

Next, we have the early connection between the serpent and the powers of nature, the cloud and the rain, as appears in the familiar Vedic legend of Indra and the Dragon Ahi, and Seshanâga, the great world serpent, which appears in so many of the primitive mythologies.

The serpent would again receive respect as the emblem

of life; his shape would, as in many forms of primitive ornament, be associated with the ring, as a symbol of eternity; he is excessively long-lived, and periodically renews his life.

He has, further, as in the Saiva cultus, become associated with phallicism, and with the sexual powers, as in the Adam legend. "The serpent round the neck of Siva denotes the endless cycle of recurring years, and a second necklace of skulls about his person, with numerous other serpents, symbolizes the eternal revolution of ages and the successive dissolution and regeneration of the races of mankind."[1]

Lastly, the cultus may have a totemistic basis. As Strabo describes the Ophiogeneis or serpent races of Phrygia actually retaining physical affinity with the snakes to whom they were to be believed to be allied, the Cheros of the eastern districts of the North-Western Provinces and the Bais Râjputs of Oudh profess to be descended from the Great Serpent. Gautama Buddha himself is said to have been of serpent lineage.

But the great serpent race was that of the Nâgas, to whom much ill-considered argument and crude speculation have been devoted. According to one theory they were Skythic emigrants from Central Asia, but whether antecedent or subsequent to the so-called Aryan inroad is disputed. They seem to have been accustomed to use the serpent as a national symbol, and hence became identified with the snake. Some of the myths seem to imply that they suffered persecution at the hands of the Brâhmans, such as the tale of the burning of the Khândava forest, the opening scenes of the Mahâbhârata, and the exploits of the youthful Krishna. They are, again, associated with Buddhism on monuments like those of Ajanta, and another theory would make them out to be the Dasyus, or aboriginal races of Upper India, who were the first to adopt Buddhism and were exterminated in the Brâhmanical revival. Little, in fact, is known of them, save that they may have been early worshippers

[1] Monier-Williams, "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 319 sqq.

SIVE AND THE COBRA.

of the snake, may have embraced Buddhism, and may have introduced the worship into India from some northern home.[1] But Mr. Ferguson's theory that snake-worship was of purely Turanian origin is, to say the least, very doubtful, and his belief that Saivism is antagonistic to snake-worship, and that Vaishnavism, which he regards as a modification of Buddhism, encourages it, is opposed by the numerous examples of the connection of the serpent with the Lingam.

## SESHANÂGA.

Below the seven Pâtâlas, according to the Vishnu Purâna, is Vishnu incarnated as Seshanâga, and known by the name Ananta, or "Endless." He has a thousand heads adorned with the mystical Swâstika, and in each head a jewel to give light. He is accompanied by Varunî, the goddess of wine (who has nowadays been replaced by Madain, who is venerated by Chamârs in Oudh), supports the world on his head, holds in one hand a pestle and in the other a plough, which, as we shall see later on, connects him with agriculture

## SNAKE SHRINES.

In various places snakes are provided with special shrines. Thus, in Garhwâl, Seshanâga is honoured at Pandukeswar; Bhekal Nâg at Ratgâon; Sangal Nâg at Talor; Bânpa Nâg at Margâon, and many others of the same kind.[2] In fact, all along the Himâlaya the worship extensively prevails. Kailang Nâg is the chief Himâlayan godling, and as the

[1] Wheeler, "History of India," i. 148; "Gazetteer Central Provinces," lxiii.; lxxii.; Campbell, "Notes," 269; Ferguson, "Tree and Serpent Worship," Appendix D; Elliot, "Supplementary Glossary," s.v. "Gaur Taga"; Tod, "Annals," i. 38; Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 280 sqq., 297; Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," i. 414 sq.

[2] Bhekal Nâg is perhaps the Sanskrit *bheka*, "frog." It has been suggested that the gypsy *Beng* or Devil is connected with Bheka, and thus allied to serpent-worship (Groome, "Encyclopædia Britannica," Art. "Gypsies"). Sir G. Cox ("Introduction," 87, note) makes out Bheki, or "the squatting frog," to be an old name for the sun. For the Himâlayan snake shrines see Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, ii. 374 sq.

Vedic Ahi controls the clouds, so he gives fine weather. A victim is killed, and one of his disciples, after drinking the blood, gets into a state of afflatus. Finally, he gasps out that the sacrifice is accepted, and falls down in a state of exhaustion. The old shrine to the serpent deity at Kângra, known as Baghsu Nâg, has been converted into a Saiva temple under the name of Baghsunâtha, another instance of the adoption of strange deities into orthodox Hinduism.

"The Nâg is specially the guardian of cattle and water-springs. According to the legend, the valleys of Kashmîr and Nepâl were in some remote period the abode of Nâgas. The milk of a cow is usually presented to a Nâg, and goats and sheep are usually sacrificed to him, as to other godlings. So far as I am aware, the only place in the Himâlaya where the living snake is worshipped is at the foot of the Rotung pass."[1] The Nepâl serpent king is Karkotaka, who dwelt in the lake Nâgavâsa, and Siva in the form of Karkotaka Nâga has a temple at Barha Kotra in the Bânda District.

In one of the Nepâl temples is a representation of a Nâg Kanyâ, a serpent maiden or mermaid, sitting on a tortoise.[2] This serpent maiden constantly appears in Indian folk-lore. Such is Vijayâvatî, daughter of Gandamâlin, one of the snake kings, who is of surpassing loveliness, rescues and marries the hero. She is represented by the Melusina of European folk-lore, and one of her kindred survived to our own day, to appear as Elsie Venner in one of the finest novels of this generation.[3]

Curious as it may appear, all the Kashmîr temples were originally surrounded by artificial tanks, constructed in order to propitiate the Nâgas. Ancient stones covered with figures of snakes are occasionally to be seen worked up into the walls of modern buildings. Abul Fazl says that in his time there were nearly seven hundred figures of snake gods existing in Kashmîr. The snake, it is needless to say, is a common emblem in temples all over the country. An

[1] Oldham, "Contemporary Review," April, 1885.
[2] "Oldfield, "Sketches," ii. 204; Wright, "History," 85.
[3] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 173, 544.

ancient temple at Bilâspur in the Central Provinces has, as its only image, that of the cobra.[1]

Snake-worship appears constantly in history and legend. There is a passage in Plutarch from which it appears to have been the custom to sacrifice an old woman (previously condemned to death for some crime) to the serpent gods by burying her alive on the banks of the Indus. Ktesias also mentions the worship of snakes, and in the Buddhist legends snakes are often referred to as the guardian deities of towns.[2]

In the folk-tales, Naravâhanadatta worships snakes in a grove sacred to them, and Bhîmabhatta goes to the temple of the chief of the snakes, which he finds full of long wreaths of flowers in form like serpents, and a great lake sacred to Vâsuki, studded with red lotuses, which seemed like clouds of smoke from the fume of snake poison.[3]

A curious legend tells how Kadrû and Vinatâ were the two wives of the patriarch Kasyapa, the former being the mother of the serpent race, and the other of the birds. A discussion arose between them regarding the colour of the tails of the horses of the sun, Vinatâ insisting that they were white and Kadrû that they were black. It was agreed that whichever of the two was proved to be wrong should serve the other. So Kadrû contrived to fasten one of her black snakes on to the back of one of the horses, and Vinatâ, thinking this was the real tail, accepted defeat; so the snakes rule the birds for ever.

Nahusha, according to one version of his legend, aspired to the love of the queen of India when her husband concealed himself because he had killed a Brâhman. A thousand Rishis bore the litter of the presumptuous sinner through the air, and when in his pride he touched Agastya Muni with his foot, the offended sage cursed him, and he became a serpent. Finally he was pardoned by the intercession of Yudhishthira, threw off his serpent form, and was raised to the heaven of the gods.

[1] "Calcutta Review," li. 304 sq.; liv. 25 sq.; Ferguson, "Eastern Architecture," 289; "Central Provinces Gazetteer," 86.

[2] Tawney, *loc. cit.* i. 577.

[3] Ibid., i. 312; ii. 225.

Near Jait, in the Mathura District, is a tank with the broken statue of a hooded serpent in it. Once upon a time a Râja married a princess from a distant land, and wished to bring her home with him. She refused to come until he announced his lineage. Her husband told her that she would regret her curiosity, but she persisted. At last he took her to the river and warned her again, but in vain. Then he told her not to be alarmed at anything she saw, adding that if she did so, she would lose him. Saying this, he began to descend slowly into the water, all the time trying to dissuade her, till the water rose to his neck. Then, after a last attempt to induce her to abandon her curiosity, he dived and reappeared in the form of a Nâga, and raising his head over the water, he said, "This is my lineage. I am a Nâgavansi." His wife could not suppress an exclamation of grief, on which the Nâga was turned into stone, where he lies to this day. Here we have another instance of the consequences of the violation of the curiosity taboo.[1]

The town of Nigohan in the Lucknow District is said to have been founded by Raja Nâhuk of the Chandravansi line of kings. Near it is a large tank, in which the legend says that the Râja, transformed into a snake for the sin of killing a Brâhman, was compelled to live. Here at length the Pândava brothers, in their wanderings after their battle with the Kauravas, came, and as they went to draw water, the serpent put to each of them five questions touching the vanity of human wishes and the advantages of absorption from the world. Four out of the five brethren failed to answer and were dragged under the water, but the riddle was solved by the fifth. The spell was thus loosed, and the Râja's deliverer had come. The Pâṇdu put his ring round the body of the serpent, and he was restored to human form. In his gratitude he performed a great sacrifice, and to this day the cultivators digging small wells in the centre of the tank in the dry season, come across the burnt barley, rice, and betel-nuts used in the sacrifices.[2]

[1] "Archæological Reports," vii. 4. [2] "Settlement Report," 121.

The old Buddhist traveller thus describes the serpent deity in the temple at Sankisa in the Farrukhâbâd District—"A white-eared dragon is the patron of this body of the priests. It is he who causes fertilizing and seasonable showers of rain to fall within their country, and preserves it from plagues and calamity, and so causes the priesthood to dwell in security. The priests, in gratitude for these favours, have erected a dragon chapel, and within it placed a seat for his accommodation; and, moreover, they make special contributions in the shape of religious offerings to provide the dragon with food. Towards the end of each season of rest, the dragon incontinently assumes the form of a little serpent, both of whose ears are white. The body of priests, recognizing him, place in the midst for his use a copper vessel full of cream. The serpent then proceeds to come down from the highest part of the alcove, all the while moving, as though he would pay his respects to all those around him. He then suddenly disappears. He makes his appearance once every year."[1]

According to Gen. Cunningham, the only spot which can be identified with any certainty at Sankisa is the tank of the Nâga, which still exists to the south-east of the ruins. The name of the Nâga is Kârewar, which appears to mean "the black one," and that of the tank Kandaiya Tâl. Milk is still offered to him on every day of May, the Nâgpanchamî festival in August, and at any other time when rain is wanted.[2]

There are many instances of this control of the Nâga over the weather. Thus, in Nepâl, when Râja Gunkamdeva committed incest, the gods in their wrath withheld the rain. Finally the Râja managed to catch the great Nâga Karkotaka, and the other Nâgas came and worshipped him and gave him each a likeness of himself drawn with his own blood, and declared that whenever there was a drought hereafter, plentiful rain would fall as soon as these pictures were worshipped.

So, Gorakhnâtha confined the nine Nâgas, and there was

[1] Beal, "Travels of Fah Hian," 67 sq.
[2] "Archæological Reports," i. 274.

a drought until Matsyendranâtha appeared and released them, on which the clouds gave rain.[1]

The plan of propitiating the Nâga with an offering of milk is found also in the case of the Durham legend of the Lambton worm and the dragon of Deerhurst in Gloucestershire.[2]

The sacred dragons of this kind are innumerable. The Buddhist cave at Pabhosa in the Allahâbâd District was the home of a monster of this class, who was subdued by Buddha.[3] That in the dragon tank at Râmagrâma used to assume the form of a Brâhman.[4] Dr. Buchanan tells of another at Bhâgalpur. "They showed me a hole in a rock opening into a hollow space close by the path leading up to their village. They said that this hole was the abode of a very large serpent, which they considered a kind of god. In cold weather they never saw it, but in the hot season it was constantly observed lying in the hollow before its den. The people pass by it without apprehension, thinking it understands their language, and would on no account injure one of them, should even a child or a drunken person fall on it."[5]

But all such snakes are not friendly. In the Hitopadesa, the faithful mungoose takes the place in the legend of Beth-gelert of the hound and kills the deadly snake. Some reference to this famous folk-tale will be made in another connection. Aghâsura, "the evil demon," the king of the serpents, tried to devour the divine infant Krishna. When he and his foster-father Nanda were asleep together, a huge boa-constrictor laid hold of Nanda by the toe, and would speedily have devoured him, but Krishna, hearing his cries, ran to his side and lightly set his foot on the monster's head. At the very touch the serpent was transformed, and assumed the figure of a lovely youth; "for years ago a Ganymede of Heaven's Court, by name Sudarsana, in pride of beauty and exalted birth, had vexed the holy sage Angiras when in deep

[1] Wright, "History of Nepâl," 85, 141.
[2] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 289; "Gloucestershire Folk-lore," 23.
[3] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 144. [4] Beal, *loc. cit.*, 90.
[5] "Eastern India," ii. 149.

contemplation, by dancing backwards and forwards before him, and by his curses had been metamorphosed into a snake, in that vile shape to expiate his offence, until the advent of Krishna."[1] We have already spoken of another famous Mathura snake, the Nâga of Jait, whose tail is supposed to reach underground to Brindaban, seven miles away.[2] The curious dragon cave at Kausambhi at Allahâbâd was one of the last notable discoveries of the Archæological Survey.[3]

## THE SNAKE GODS.

Besides the sacred Nâgas there are the regular snake gods. The serpent deity of Benares is Nâgîswar, who is represented by a serpent twining round the chief idol, and like his kindred rules the weather. The Nâg Kuân, or dragon well, is one of the oldest shrines in the city.[4] Târa is the snake goddess of the Kols, and the Khândhs call her Târâ Penu, the heavenly "star snake." Vâsuki, the "abider," now known as Bâsuk Nâg, has many shrines, and in all of them, as at Dâraganj, near Allahâbâd, described by Sir Monier-Williams,[5] the priest in charge is always a man of low caste, a fact pointing to the non-Aryan character of the worship. He forms one of the triad of the snake gods which rule the snakes of earth and hell, his fellows being Sesha and Takshaka, "he who cuts off." Vâsuki often appears in the folk-tales. We find him resisting Garuda, the destroyer of his subjects. His brother's son Kirtisena is, according to one legend, a Brâhman, and weds a mortal maiden by the Gandharva form; his eldest brother Vasunemi presents a benevolent Savara with a magic lute; Vâsuki himself marries the princess Yasodharâ, and their son is Priyadarsana. Vâsuki has a thousand ears. Once he served the gods by becoming the rope which the mount Mandara was

[1] Growse, "Mathura," 55, 58. [2] Ibid., 71.
[3] "Reports" xxi. 2, "Academy," 23rd April, 1887.
[4] Sherring, "Sacred City," 75, 87 sqq.; Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 211. For weather snakes see Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 438.
[5] "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 323.

whirled round, and the sea was churned and produced Srî or Lakshmî, goddess of wealth.[1] The foot of the celebrated iron pillar at Delhi was driven so deep in order that it might rest on the head of Vâsuki. A Brâhman told the king that this would secure the stability of his kingdom. The Râja doubted this, and had the pillar dug up, when its base was found wet with the blood of the serpent king. Owing to the incredulity of the Râja it could never again be firmly fixed, and his want of faith led to the ultimate downfall of his dynasty. The same tale has reached the Himâlaya, and is told of the foundation of Almora.[2]

## THE SINHAS.

Next come the Sinhas, or snake godlings of the Panjâb and the western parts of the North-Western Provinces. "They are males, and though they cause fever they are not very malevolent, often taking away pain. They have got great power over milch cattle, and the milk of the eleventh day after calving is sacred to them, and libations of milk (as in the case of the Sankisa dragon) are always acceptable. They are generally distinguished by some colour, the most commonly worshipped being Kâli, 'the black one,' Hari, 'green,' Bhûra, 'grey,' Sinh. But the diviner will often declare a fever to be caused by some Sinh no one has ever heard of before, but to whom a shrine must be built. And so they multiply in a most perplexing manner. Dead men also have a way of becoming snakes—a fact which is revealed in a dream, when again a shrine must be built. If a peasant sees a snake he will salute it, and if it bite him, he or his heirs, as the case may be, will build a shrine on the spot to prevent the recurrence of such an occurrence. They are the servants of Vâsuki Nâga, King of Pâtâla, or Tartarus, and their worship is certainly connected with that of the Pitris or ancestors, though it is difficult to see exactly in what the connection lies."[3]

[1] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 32, 55, 538: ii. 568.
[2] Gangadatta, "Folk-lore of Kumaun," Introduction, vii.
[3] Ibbetson, "Panjâb Ethnography," 114; "Legends of the Panjâb," i. 426.

## CONNECTION OF SNAKES WITH ANCESTOR-WORSHIP.

The connection is thus explained by Mr. Spencer:[1] "The other self of the dead relative is supposed to come back occasionally to the old house; how else is it possible of the survivors sleeping there to see him in their dreams? Here are creatures which commonly, unlike wild animals, come into houses; come in, too, secretly at night. The implication is clear. That snakes which specially do this are the returned dead, is inferred by people in Asia, Africa, and America; the haunting of houses being the common trait of the kind of snakes reverenced and worshipped." The benevolent household snake, which in the folk-tales assists the hero and protects the family of which he is the guardian, thus represents the soul of some deceased ancestor which has taken up its residence there. That the dead do appear as snakes is familiar in European folk-lore. Thus, for instance, the pious Æneas saw his father Anchises in the snake which crept from his tomb. We have already come across the same idea in the case of the Satî. It was an old European idea that this household snake, if not conciliated, and when dead buried under the threshold, a sacred place, prevented conception.[2]

## DEIFIED SNAKE HEROES.

We have already mentioned the regular snake godling Gûga. With him are often worshipped his father Jaur or Jewar Sinh, and Arjan and Sarjan, his twin half-brothers.[3]

Pîpa, the Brâhman, is another deity of the same class in Râjputâna. He was in the habit of giving milk to a serpent whose retreat was on the banks of the Sampu, or Snake Lake. The serpent used in return to present him daily with two pieces of gold. Being obliged to go away on business, he gave instructions to his son to continue the

[1] "Principles of Sociology," i. 345; Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 407 sq.; Wake, "Serpent-worship," 105; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 240.

[2] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 132.

[3] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 2.

offering; but the youth, deeming it a good opportunity of becoming master of the treasure, took a stick with him, and when the serpent came forth for his expected food, he struck him violently. But the snake managed to retreat into his hole. On his return, the young Brâhman related his adventures to his mother. She was horrified at the account, and forthwith made arrangements for sending her son away out of danger. But in the morning when she went to call him she found to her horror that her son was dead, and a huge snake lay coiled up beside his body. Pîpa on his return was inconsolable, but, stifling his thoughts of revenge, he propitiated the monster with copious libations of milk. The serpent was appeased, and revealed to Pîpa the treasures which he guarded, commanding him to erect a monument which should transmit the knowledge of the event to future ages. Hence Pîpa has become a sort of snake godling, and the town of Pîpar and the Sampu Lake still by their names commemorate the legend.[1]

This famous tale, which was originally founded on a story in the Panchatantra, has come into European folk-lore through the Gesta Romanorum, and forms an excellent example of a genuine Indian folk-tale which has been naturalized in Western lands.[2] The incident of the animals which produce gold is common both in European and Indian folk-lore. Even Marabhuti in the tale of Somadeva is able to spit gold, and every one knows Grimm's pretty tale of the "Three little men in the wood," in which a piece of gold drops from the mouth of the good girl every time she speaks.

## SNAKE TREASURE GUARDIANS.

Snakes throughout folk-lore are the guardians of treasure.[3] The griffins of Scythia guarded the treasures coveted by the

[1] Tod, "Annals," i. 777 sqq.

[2] Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 127; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 405; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 454; Jacobs, "English Fairy Tales," 207, 251.

[3] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 407; Clouston, *loc. cit.*, i. 126.

Arimaspians; the dragon watched the golden apples of the Hesperides; in the Nibelungenlied the dragon Fafnir keeps guard over a vast treasure of gold, which Sigurd seizes after he has killed the monster. It is a common Indian belief that when a very rich man dies without an heir, he cannot take away his thoughts from his treasure, and returns to guard it in the form of a monstrous serpent. But after a time he becomes tired of this serpent life, and either in a dream, or assuming the human voice, he asks the persons living near the treasure to take it and offer him one of their dearest relatives in return. When some avaricious person complies with the serpent's wishes, he gets possession of the wealth, and the serpent then enters into some other state of existence. Instances of treasure speaking are not uncommon. Some time ago two old ladies, whose houses were divided by a wall, formally applied to me to have the wall excavated in the presence of respectable witnesses, because a treasure-guarding snake was often heard speaking from inside the wall, and begging some one to take over the wealth which was in his charge.

Snake charmers are supposed to have the power of recognizing these serpent treasure guardians, follow them stealthily to their holes, and ask them to point out the deposit. This they will do in consideration of the offering of a drop of blood from the little finger of a first-born son,[1] an obvious survival of human sacrifice, which is constantly found connected with the serpent cultus.

Various suggestions have been made to account for the idea of snakes guarding treasure. By one theory there is some connection between the snake and primitive metallurgy; by another, that the snake may have been the totem of the early jewellers; by a third, that the jewelled head of the snake is at the bottom of the matter.[2] But it seems more probable that the idea is based on the conception of the snake as a haunter of houses and temples, and the divine protector of the inmates and their wealth.

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 91.
[2] Conway, "Demonology," i. 353 sq.

Indian folk-lore is full of such stories. In the Dakkhin tale, Seventee Bâî gets possession of the enormous diamond which the cobra used to take about in his mouth; and in the Bengal story Faqîr Chand obtains the serpent's crest-jewel.[1] The same idea appears in the Arabian Nights. Mr. Forbes tells rather a ghastly tale on this subject. He personally investigated a mysterious chamber supposed to contain treasure. Viewed from above it was a gloomy dungeon of great depth. He desired his men to enter it, but they positively refused, alleging that "wherever money was concealed, there existed one of the Genii in the mortal form of a snake to guard it." He at last prevailed on them to descend by means of ropes. They had not been at the bottom many seconds, when they called out vehemently that they were encircled by a large snake. Finally he observed something like billets of wood, or rather more resembling a ship's cable coiled up in a dark hole. Then he saw the monster raise his head over an immense length of body, coiled in volumes on the ground. A large snake was subsequently destroyed by fire, but no treasure was found, "the owner having doubtless already removed it."[2]

## POWERS OF SNAKES IN FOLK-LORE.

Manifold are the powers of snakes in folk-lore. He can strike people dead with his look from a distance, like the "death-darting eye of cockatrice" in "Romeo and Juliet." He has the power of spitting fire from his mouth, which destroys his enemies and consumes forests. His saliva is venomous, and there are many stories of snakes spitting venom into food. In one of the versions of Bethgelert, the prince, but for his guardian bird, would have drunk as water the venom of the black snakes which drips from a tree. In the legends of Râja Rasâlu, Gûga, and Newal Dâî, the snake has power to kill and restore to life; it has the faculty of

[1] Miss Frere, "Old Deccan Tales," 33; Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales" 19.
[2] "Oriental Memoirs," ii. 19, 385.

metamorphosis and flying through the air. In one of the Kashmîr tales, the Brâhman, wishing to get rid of his wife, gives her a snake in a bag; but when she opens it, it turns into a beautiful little boy.[1] We have, again, the world-wide story of the snake rescued by the traveller, which rewards the service rendered to him by biting his benefactor. When Indra carried off the nectar, the snakes licked the bed of Kusa grass on which the vessel lay. The sharp edges of the grass cut them as they licked, so they have had double tongues ever since.[2] Every Indian rustic believes in the Domunha or snake with a mouth at both ends, which is, as might have been expected, most virulent. There are snake women, like Lamia or Vasudeva, the mystic serpent, who go about at night, and by day resume their hateful form. The humanity of the serpent race comes out clearly in the legend of Safîdon, which attributes the leprosy still found in the Panjâb to the sacrilegious acts of Vâsuki, the king of the serpents.[3]

## MODERN SNAKE-WORSHIP.

Some instances may be given of the form assumed by the worship of the snake in modern times.

The great snake festival is the Nâgpanchamî, or "Dragon's fifth," held on the fifth day of the month of Bhâdon. In the Hills it is called the Rikhî or Birurî Panchamî. Rikheswara has now become a title of Siva as lord of the Nâgas, a form in which he is represented as surrounded by serpents and crowned with the chaplet of hooded snakes. On the day of the feast the people paint figures of serpents and birds on the walls of their houses, and seven days before the festival they steep a mixture of wheat, gram, and pulse in water. On the morning of the feast they take a wisp of grass, tie it up in the form of a snake, dip it in the water in which the gram has

[1] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 492.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 182.
[3] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 99; Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," i. Introduction, xv.; "Wideawake Stories," 193, 331.

been steeped, and offer it with money and sweetmeats to the serpents.[1]

In Udaypur on this day they strew particular plants about the thresholds of houses to prevent the entrance of venomous reptiles, and in Nepâl the day is observed as the anniversary of a great struggle between a famous Nâga and Garuda, the foe of the serpent race.[2] In the eastern districts of the North-West Provinces on this day milk and dried rice are poured into a snake's hole; while doing this they call out "Snake! snake!" The feeding of snakes on this holiday is done in much the same way in Bombay.[3] After the Diwâlî in Kângra, a festival is held to bid good-bye to the snakes, at which an image of the Nâga made of cowdung is worshipped. If a snake be seen after this it is called "ungrateful," and immediately killed.[4]

In the North-Western Provinces the usual custom is for the head of the family to bathe on the morning of the feast, to paint on the wall of his sleeping-room two rude representations of serpents, and to make offerings to Brâhmans. On this day people pray to what Dr. Buchanan calls "the chief eight dragons of the pit,"[5] girls throw some playthings into the water, and labourers take a holiday and worship the tools of their craft.

In Behâr during the month of Sâwan (August) crowds of women calling themselves Nâgin, or "wives of the snake," go about begging for two and a half days, during which period they neither sleep under a roof nor eat salt. Half the proceeds of the begging are given to Brâhmans, and the other half invested in salt and sweetmeats, which are eaten by all the people of the village.[6]

In Garhwâl, the ground is freely smeared with cowdung and mud, and figures of five, seven, or nine serpents are

[1] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 851.
[2] Tod, "Annals," i. 614; Wright, "History," 37.
[3] Rousselet, "India and its Native Princes," 28.
[4] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 75.
[5] "Eastern India," ii. 481.
[6] Grierson, "Bihâr Peasant Life," 405; "Maithili Chrestomathy," 23 sqq., where examples of the songs are given; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 38.

rudely drawn with sandal-wood powder or tumeric; rice, beans, or peas are parched; lamps are lighted and waved before them; incense is burnt and food and fruit offered. These observances take place both morning and evening, and the night is spent in listening to stories in praises of the Nâga.[1]

In parts of the North-Western Provinces, with the usual Nâgpanchamî, is performed what is known as the Guruî festival. On that day offerings are made by women to the Dragon godling Nâg Deotâ. Girls let dolls float in the water of some convenient river or tank, and the village lads beat the dolls with long switches specially cut for the purpose. The legend of this rite is thus told. When Râja Janamejâya held the Sarpa Sattra or snake rite in order to destroy Takshaka, the king of the serpents, all the snakes were captured by spells and killed. But Takshaka escaped and was found to have taken refuge with Indra, on whose throne he seated himself in the shape of a mosquito. Indra was ordered to produce the fugitive, and begged the life of Takshaka, which was granted on condition that he was banished from the land. So the snake king took the shape of a Brâhman lad and retired to the Caucasus. There he settled and married, but he foolishly told the story to his wife, and she being unable to keep the secret, it finally reached the ears of Janamejâya, who sentenced him to death. Takshaka then retorted by ordering Janamejâya to cause everyone in his dominions to kill his wife as a revenge for his own wife's treachery. Janamejâya was unwilling to issue such a cruel order, so he consulted the Brâhmans. Finally, it was proclaimed that on the Nâgpanchamî, every woman, to prove her devotion to her husband, should make a doll and offer it up as a vicarious sacrifice for herself. It would seem that the rite is the survival of some rite of human sacrifice in connection with snake-worship.

The Agarwâla Banyas, who say that they are descended from Râja Vâsuki, have a special rite in honour of Astika Muni, who is said to have been the instructor of Vâsuki.

[1] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 836.

They bathe and make marks representing the snake on the walls of the house, which they worship, feed Brâhmans, and do the Ârtî or lamp rite. Each woman takes home with her some of the sesamum offered to the snake, which they sprinkle with the recitation of a spell in their houses as a means of driving away venomous snakes.

### CURE OF SNAKE-BITE.

In Hoshangâbâd there were once two brothers, Râjawa and Soral; the ghost of the former cures snake-bite, and that of the latter cattle murrain. The moment a man is bitten, he must tie a string or a strip of his dress and fasten it round his neck, crying, "Mercy! O God Râjawa!" To call on Ghori Bâdshâh, the Delhi Emperor, who conquered the country, or Râmjî Dâs Bâba will do as well. At the same time he makes a vow to give so much to the god if he recovers. When he gets home they use various tests to ascertain if the poison is in him still. They take him in and out over the threshold, and light a lamp before him, acts which are supposed to have the effect of developing latent poison. They then give him salt and leaves of the bitter Nîm tree. If he can take them he is safe. These are all, as we have already seen, scarers of evil spirits, in this case the snake demon. If he cannot take them, the whole village goes out and cries to Râjawa Deo until he recovers. No one (Sir C. A. Elliott's informant told him) had been ever known to die of a snake-bite after this treatment. But the god has no power over the dreaded Biscobra, which takes its name from the Hindi Bishkhâpra, Sanskrit Vishakhar-para, or "poison-headed," which is said to be so deadly that its very breath is venomous, one of the numerous popular delusions out of which it is hopeless to argue the rustic. The bitten man must not untie the string round his neck till the day when he goes to offer what he vows, which should be, at latest, on the next Dasahra; but if he attempts to cheat the god by offering ever so little less than he promised, he will die on the spot in agonies.[1]

[1] "Settlement Report," 120 sq.

All through Upper India the stock remedy for snake-bite is the exorcism of the Ojha or sorcerer, a performance known as Jhâr Phûnk, consisting of a series of passes, massage, and incantations, which are supposed to disperse the venom. Many, too, have faith in the so-called "Snake stone," which seems to be usually a piece of bone soaked in blood and repeatedly baked. This is supposed to have absorbent properties and to draw the venom out of the wound. It probably works by faith, and is as effective as the Achates or Agate of which Pliny writes: "People are persuaded that it availeth much against the venomous spiders and scorpions, which property I could very well believe to be in the Sicilian Agate, for that so soon as serpents come within the air and breath of the said province of Sicily, as venomous as they be otherwise, they die thereupon." [1]

## THE SNAKE IN FOLK-LORE.

The references to the snake in folk-lore and popular belief are so numerous that only a few examples can be given. The Dhâman (*Ptyas mucosus*), a quite harmless snake, is said in Bombay to give a fatal bite on Sundays, and to kill cattle by crawling under them, or putting its tail up their nostrils. Its shadow is also considered malignant. It is believed to suck the milk of cattle, and that if a buffalo is looked on by it, it immediately dies. Of the Ghonas snake it is believed that it bites only at night, and at whatever hour of the night the victim is bitten, he dies just before daybreak.[2]

About these snake stones some curious tales are told. By one account, when a goat kills a snake, it eats it and then ruminates, after which it spits out a bead, which, when applied to a snake-bite, absorbs the poison and swells. If it be put into milk, and squeezed, the poison drips out of it like blood, and the bitten person is cured. If it be not put in milk it will burst in pieces. By another account, in the pouch-like appendages of the older Adjutant birds (*Leptoptilos*

[1] "Natural History," xxxvii. 10.

[2] "Gazetteer," xi. 36.

*Argala*) the fang of a snake is sometimes found. This, if rubbed over the place where a poisonous snake has bitten a man, is supposed to prevent the venom spreading to the vital parts of the body. Others say that it is found within the head of the Adjutant, and that it is only necessary tc rub it to the bitten place and put it into milk, when it becomes black through the venom. What was known as the Ovum Anguinum of the Britons is said to have been a bead which assists children to cut their teeth and cures the chincough and the ague. Mr. Campbell[1] says he once possessed one of these "snake's eggs," which was a blue and white glass bead and supposed to be a charm used by the women of the prehistoric races.

A very common incident in the folk-tales is that the heroine is beset by snakes which come out of her nose or mouth at night and kill her newly-wedded husband, as the evil spirit kills the husband of Sara in the marriage chamber, until the hero lies awake and succeeds in destroying them.

Another power snakes possess is that of identifying the rightful heirs of kingdoms, and, as in the case of Drona, who found the Ahîr Adirâja sleeping in the shade of the hood of a cobra, announce that he is born to rule.[2] So in the mythology the Nâga king Machalinda spreads his hood over the Buddha to protect him from the rain and flies.[3] Many of these Nâgas indeed are friendly, as in the case of the Banjâra, who, in order to avoid octroi duty, declared his valuable goods to be Glauber salts, and Glauber salts they became until they were restored to their original condition by the intercession of the kindly Nâga of the Gundwa tank.[4] In one of Somadeva's tales the friendly snake clings round the Râja till he promises to release the Bodhisattwa out of prison.

## SNAKES AND EUPHEMISM.

Snakes should, of course, be addressed euphemistically as "Maternal uncle," or "Rope," and if a snake bites you, you

[1] "Popular Tales," ii. 385. [2] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 28.
[3] Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," 146. [4] "Oudh Gazetteer," i. 597.

should never mention its name, but say, "A rope has touched me." The Mirzapur Kharwârs tell of a man who once came on a Nâgin laying her eggs. When she saw him she fell at his feet and asked him to throw the eggs in a water-hole. So he took up the eggs on a bamboo sieve and went with her to the brink. The Nâgin plunged in and said, "Do not be afraid! Come on!" He followed her, the waters dried up, and he came to the palace of the Nâg, who entertained him royally, and offered to give him anything he wished. The boor asked only for a pan, pot, and spoon, which the Nâga gave him, and he came home to find his relations doing the death ceremonies in his honour, believing he had been carried off by a tiger. He said nothing of his adventures till the day of his death, when he told the story. So the Nâga in other tales of the same class blesses and rewards the lucky man who has delivered the young snake from his persecutors who caught him while in the upper air. So in the Arabian Nights, the relations of Jullanar of the sea show their gratitude to the king who is kind to her on earth.

On the basis of the same idea which has been already referred to in the case of the Churel, it is believed that if the shadow of a pregnant woman fall on a snake it becomes blind.[1]

## THE SNAKE JEWEL.

The snake, like the "toad ugly and venomous," wears on his head the Mani or precious jewel, which is a stock subject in Indian folk-tales. Thus, in one of Somadeva's stories, "when Nala heard this, he looked round, and beheld a snake coiled up near the fire, having his head encircled with the rays of the jewels of his crest."[2] It is sometimes metamorphosed into a beautiful youth; it equals the treasure of seven kings; it can be hidden or secured only by cowdung or horsedung being thrown over it; and if it is acquired the serpent dies. It lights the hero on his

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 15.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 564; ii. 315.

way to the palace under the sea where is the silver jewelled tree; or it is possessed by the sleeping beauty, who cannot return to her home beneath the waters, and loses the hero until it is recovered. Its presence acts as an amulet against evil, and secures the attainment of every wish. It protects the owner from drowning, the waters parting on each side of him, and allowing him to pass over rivers dry-shod.[1]

## THE RAINBOW AND THE SNAKE.

So the rainbow is connected with the snake, being the fume of a gigantic serpent blown up from underground. In Persia it was called the "celestial serpent." We have already seen that the Milky Way is regarded as the path of the Nâgas in the sky. It is possibly under the influence of the association of the snake, a treasure guardian, that the English children run to find where the rainbow meets the earth, and expect to find a crock of gold buried at its base.[2]

## THE HOUSEHOLD SNAKE.

The belief in the influence of the guardian domestic or national snake is universal. When the Persians invaded Athens the people would not leave the city till they learned that the guardian snake had refused its food and abandoned the citadel. A snake at Lanuvium and at Epirus resided in a grove and was waited on by a virgin priestess, who entered naked and fed it once a year, when by its acceptance or refusal of the offering, the prospects of the harvest were ascertained. The Teutons and Celts had also their sacred guardian snake.

In the Panjâb Hills, every householder keeps an image of the Nâga or harmless snake, as contrasted with the Sânp, which is venomous. This snake is put in charge of the householder's homestead, and is held responsible that no cobra or dangerous serpent enters it. It is supposed to have

[1] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 304, 424; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 15, 76.
[2] Sleeman, "Rambles," i. 42; Conway, "Demonology," i. 354.

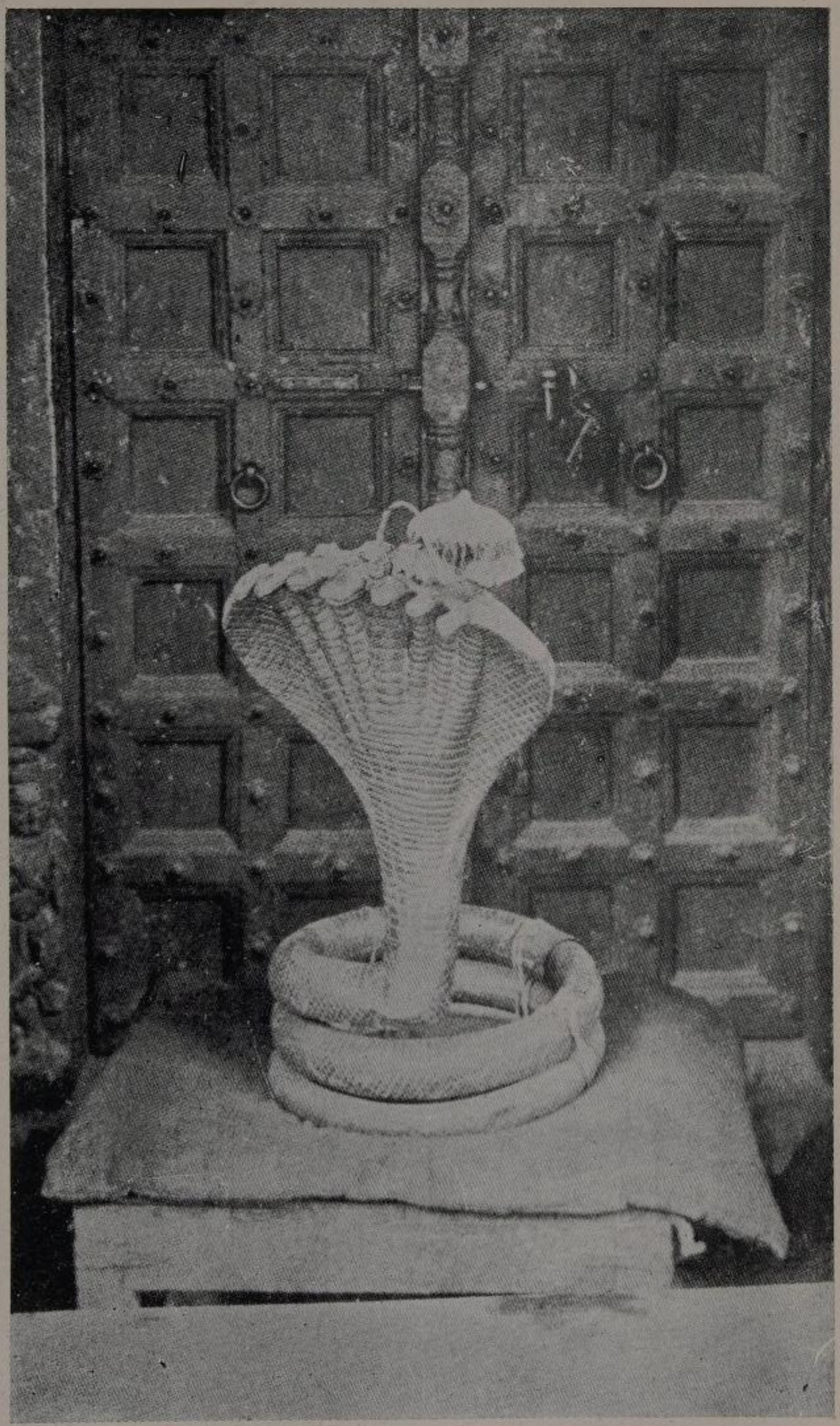

IMAGE OF THE HOUSEHOLD SNAKE.

the power of driving all cobras out of the place. Should rain drive the house snake out of his hole, he is worshipped. No image of a cobra or other venomous snake is ever made for purposes of worship. Ant-hills are believed to be the homes of snakes, and there the people offer sugar, rice, and millet for forty days.[1] These correspond to the benevolent domestic snakes, of whom Aubrey says that "the Bramens have them in great veneration; they keep their corne. I think it is Tavernier mentions it."[2]

They are, in fact, as we have already seen, the representatives of the benevolent ancestral ghosts. Hence the deep-rooted prejudice against killing the snake, which is both guardian and god. "If," says Mr. Lang,[3] "the serpent were the deity of an earlier race, we could understand the prejudice against killing it, as shown in the Apollo legend." The evidence accumulated in this chapter will perhaps go some way to settle this question, as far as India is concerned.

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 92, 59.

[2] "Remaines," 39. He perhaps refers to Tavernier, "Travels' Ball's Edition), i. 42; ii. 249.

[3] "Custom and Myth," ii. 197.

# CHAPTER III.

## TOTEMISM AND FETISHISM.

Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum,
Cum faber incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,
Maluit esse deum.

*Horace*, Sat. I. viii. 1-3.

"A TOTEM is a class of material objects, which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between them and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation."[1] As distinguished from a fetish, a totem is never an isolated individual, but always a class of objects, generally a class of animals or plants, rarely class of inanimate objects, very rarely a class of artificial objects.

### ORIGIN OF TOTEMISM.

As regards the origin of totemism great diversity of opinion exists. Mr. Herbert Spencer considers that "it arose from a misinterpretation of nicknames; savages first took their names from natural objects, and then confusing these objects with their ancestors of the same name, paid the same respect to the material totem as they were in the habit of doing to their own ancestors."[2] The objection to this is, as Mr. Frazer shows, that it attributes to verbal misunderstandings far more influence than, in spite of the comparative mythologists, they ever seem to have exercised.

Sir J. Lubbock derives the idea from the practice of naming persons and families after animals, but "in dropping

[1] Frazer, "Totemism," 1; and his article on "Totemism," in "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th Edition

[2] "Principles of Sociology," i. 367.

the intermediate links of ancestor-worship and verbal misunderstanding, he has stripped the theory of all that lent it even an air of plausibility." [1]

Recent inquiries in the course of the Ethnographical Survey of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces enable us perhaps to approach to a solution of the problem.

To begin with, at a certain stage of culture the idea of the connection between men and animals is exceedingly vivid, and reacts powerfully on current beliefs. The animal or plant is supposed to have a soul or spirit, like that of a human being, and this soul or spirit is capable of transfer to the man or animal and *vice versâ*. This feeling comes out strongly in popular folk-lore, much of which is made up of instances of metamorphosis such as these. The witch or sorcerer is always changing into a tiger, a monkey, or a fish; the princess is always appearing out of the aubergine or pomegranate.

We have, again, the familiar theory to which reference has already been made, that the demon or magician has an external soul, which he keeps occasionally in the Life Index, which is often a bird, a tree, and an animal. If this life index can be seized and destroyed, the life of the monster is lost with it.

These principles, which are thoroughly congenial to the beliefs of all primitive races, naturally suggest a much closer union between man and other forms of animal or vegetable life than people of a higher stage of development either accept or admit. With people, then, at this stage of culture, the theory that the ancestor of the clan may have been a bear or a tortoise would present no features of improbability.

This theory accounts, as Mr. Frazer shows, for many of the obscure rites of initiation which prevail among most savage tribes and in a modified form among the Brâhmanized Hindus. The basis of such rites is probably to extract the soul of the youth and temporarily transfer it to the totem, from which in turn fresh life is infused into him.

[1] "Origin of Civilization," 260, and Mr. Frazer's criticism, *loc. cit.*

Lastly, the result of the Indian evidence is that it is only in connection with the rules of exogamy that totemism at the present day displays any considerable degree of vitality. The real basis of exogamy in Northern India seems to be the totem sept, which, however, flourishes at the present day only among the Drâvidian tribes and those allied to them. But it would, it is almost certain, be incorrect to say that while totemism is at present most active among the Drâvidians, in connection with marriage, it was peculiar to them. It is more reasonable to infer that it continues to flourish among these races, because of their isolation from Brahmanical influence. As among the inferior races of the Gangetic valley, the primitive family customs connected with marriage, birth, and death have undergone a process of denudation from their connection with the more advanced Hindu races which surround them, so to a large degree in Northern India, the totemistic sept names have been gradually shed off, and replaced by an eponymous, local, or territorial nomenclature. In short, under the pressure of higher culture, the kindred of the swan, turtle, or parrot have preferred to call themselves Kanaujiya or "men of Kanauj," Sarwariya or "residents of the land beyond the Sarju river," and Raghuvansa or Bhriguvansa, "descendants of the sages Raghu or Bhrigu."

We find, then, among such races, as might have been expected, that at the present day the totemistic sept system exists only in obscure and not easily recognizable forms. Folk etymology has also exercised considerable influence, and a sept ashamed of its totemistic title readily adopts some title of the eponymous type, or a local cognomen sounding something like the name of the primitive totem. It is perhaps too much to expect that a careful exploration of the sept titles or tribal customs of Northern India will lead to extensive discoveries of the primitive totemistic organization. The process of trituration which has affected the caste nomenclature for such a lengthened period, and the obscuration of primitive belief by association with more cultured tribes, have been so continuous as to leave only a

few fragments and isolated survivals; but it is by a course of such inquiry that the totemistic basis of the existing caste system can alone be reached.

I have considered this question in the light of the most recent evidence in another place,[1] and it is needless to repeat the results which were there arrived at.

For the purpose of such an investigation it is convenient to have some sort of working classification of the tests of, and the forms in which, totemism usually appears. These have been laid down by the late Professor Robertson-Smith as follows:—

(*a*) The existence of stocks named after plants, animals, or similar totems.

(*b*) The prevalence of a conception that the members of the stock are of the blood of the eponym, or are sprung from a plant, etc., of the species chosen as the totem.

(*c*) The ascription of a sacred character to the totem.

## STOCKS NAMED FROM ANIMALS, PLANTS, ETC.

First as to the stocks named from animals, plants, etc. There are two divisions of the Pûra Brâhmans of the Dakkhin, known as Bakriyâr and Chheriyâr, founded on the names of the male and female goat. In Upper India, the Kâchhis or market gardeners, and the Kachhwâha sept of Râjputs allege that they take their names from the Kachchhapa or tortoise, as the Kurmis refer their name to the Kûrma or turtle. The Ahban Râjputs and the Ahiwâsis of Mathura connect their names with Ahi, the dragon. The Kalhans Râjputs derive their name from the Kâlahans or black goose. Among Brâhmans and other high castes, Bhâradvaja, "the lark, the bringer of food," has given its name to many sections. Mr. Risley thinks that the fact of there being a Kasyapa division of Kumhârs or potters, who venerate the tortoise, points to the name being a corruption of Kachchhapa, the tortoise, in which case their name would have the same origin as that of the Kâchhis already mentioned.

[1] "Tribes and Castes," Introduction.

Many people, again, claim kindred with the sun and moon. Such are the Natchez of North America and the Incas of Peru.[1] There are many children of the sun and moon in Arabia,[2] and gypsies of the east of Europe have a legend that they are descended from the sun and moon; the sun having debauched his moon sister, was condemned to wander for ever, in consequence of which their descendants can never rest.[3] So in India, the Sûrajbansi and Chandrabansi Râjputs are said to take their names from Sûraj, the sun, and Chandra, the moon, respectively.

According to Captain J. Montgomerie,[4] round Kashmîr, and among the aboriginal tribes of the Himâlayan slopes, men are usually named after animals, as the Bakhtiyâris, one of the nomad tribes of Persia, name their children usually not after the Prophet, but after wild animals, such as the wolf, tiger, and the like, adding some descriptive epithet. In the same way a tribe of Lodi Pathâns in the Panjâb are known as Nâhar or "wolf." This is said to be due to their rapacity, and may be as likely a nickname as a survival of totemism.[5]

## TOTEM NAMES AMONG THE DRÂVIDIANS.

The evidence of this point is, as has been already said, much more distinct among the Drâvidians than among the more Hinduized races. Details of such names among the Agariyas, Nats, Baiswârs, and Ghasiyas have been given in detail elsewhere.[6] Thus, to take the Dhângars, a caste in Mirzapur, allied to the Orâons of Bengal, we find that they have eight exogamous septs, all or most of which are of totemistic origin. Thus, Ilha is said to mean a kind of fish, which members of this sept do not eat; Kujur is a kind of jungle herb which this sept does not use; Tirik is probably

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough," i. 13, note.
[2] Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 17.
[3] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 90.
[4] Quoted by McLennan, "Fortnightly Review," 1869, p. 419.
[5] O'Brien, "Multâni Glossary," 260 sq.
[6] "Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh," s.v.v.

the Tirki or bull sept of the Orâons. In Chota Nâgpur, members of this sept do not touch any cattle after their eyes are open. It illustrates the uncertainty of these usages that in other places they say that the word Tirki means "young mice," which they are prohibited from using.[1] Again, the Mirzapur sept of the Dhângars, known as Lakara, is apparently identical with that called Lakrar among the Bengal Orâons, who must not eat tiger's flesh as they are named after the tiger; in Mirzapur they derive their name from the Lakar Bagha, or hyæna, which they will not hunt or kill. The Bara sept is apparently the same as the Barar of the Orâons, who will not eat the leaves of the Bar tree or Ficus Indica. In Mirzapur they will not cut this tree. The Ekka sept in Mirzapur say that this name means "leopard," an animal which they will not kill, but in Chota Nâgpur the same word is said to mean "tortoise" and to be a totemistic sept of the Orâons. So, the Mirzapur Dhângars have a Tiga sept, which they say takes its name from a jungle root which is prohibited to them; but the Orâons of Bhâgalpur have a Tig sept, which, according to them, means "monkey." The last of the Mirzapur septs is the Khâha, which, like the Khakkar sept of the Orâons, means "crow," and neither will eat the bird. Similar instances might be almost indefinitely repeated from usages of the allied tribes in Mirzapur and the adjoining Bengal Districts.

## THE PANJÂB SNAKE TRIBE.

In the Panjâb there is a special snake tribe. They observe every Monday and Thursday in the snake's honour, cooking rice and milk, setting a portion aside for the snake, and never eating or making butter on those days. If they find a dead snake, they put clothes upon it, and give it a regular funeral. They will not kill a snake, and say that its bite is harmless to them. The snake, they say, changes its form every hundred years, and then becomes a man or a

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 254; Risley, "Tribes and Castes," ii. 327.

bull.[1] So, in Senegambia, "a python is expected to visit every child of the Python clan within eight days after birth; and the Psylli, a snake clan of ancient Africa, used to expose their infants to snakes in the belief that the snakes would not harm true-born children of the clan."[2] So, in Northern India the Bais Râjputs are children of the snake, and supposed to be safe from its bite, and Nâga Râja is the tribal godling of the Bâjgis. There is a well-known legend of a queen of India, who is said to have sent to Alexander, among other costly presents, a girl, who, having been fed with serpents from her infancy, partook of their venomous nature. The well-known tale of Elsie Venner has been already referred to in the same connection.

## TOTEMISM IN PROPER NAMES.

The subject of Indian proper names has not yet received the attention it deserves. The only attempt to investigate the subject, so far, is that of Major Temple.[3] In his copious lists there is ample evidence that names are freely adopted from those of animals, plants, etc. Thus we have Bagha, "Tiger"; Bheriya, "Wolf"; Billa, "Cat"; Chûha, "Rat," and so on from animals; Bagla, "Heron"; Tota, "Parrot," and so on from birds; Ajgar, "Python"; Mendak, "Frog"; Kachhua, "Tortoise;"; Bhaunra, "Bumble Bee"; Ghun, "Weevil"; Dîmak, "White Ant," etc. From plants come Bûta, "Tree"; Harabansa, "Green Bamboo" (or more probably Hari-vansa, "the genealogy of Hari" or Vishnu); Nîma, "Nîm tree"; Pîpal, "Pîpal tree"; Gulâba, "Rose"; Imliya, "Tamarind"; Sewa, "Apple"; Ilâcha, "Cardamum"; Mirchi, "Pepper"; Bhutta, "Maize."

The evidence of nomenclature must, of course, be received with caution. The essence of totemism is a confessed belief in animal descent, a name declaring that descent and some sacredness attached to the animal or other fancied ancestor. Many of these names may be nicknames, or titles of oppro-

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 91.
[2] Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 95.
[3] "Dissertation on the Proper Names of Panjâbis," 155 sq.

brium selected, as we have already shown, to baffle the Evil Eye or the influence of demons. Besides, as has been pointed out, it does not necessarily follow because an Englishman lives in "Acacia Villa" or "Laburnum Cottage," and calls his daughter "Rose" or "Violet," that he is in the totemistic stage. At the same time, it is quite possible that further inquiry will discover undoubted instances of totemism in the nomenclature of Northern India, as is the case with other races in a similar stage of culture.

## DESCENT FROM THE TOTEM.

We next come to Professor Robertson-Smith's second test, the belief in descent from the totem. This branch of the subject has been very fully illustrated by Mr. Frazer.[1] As in old times in Georgiana, according to Marco Polo, all the king's sons were born with an eagle on the right shoulder marking their royal origin,[2] so Chandragupta, king of Ujjain, was the son of a scorpion. "His mother accidentally imbibed the scorpion's emission, by means of which she conceived."[3] The Jaitwas of Râjputâna trace their descent from the monkey god Hanumân, and confirm it by alleging that the spine of their princes is elongated like a tail. In the Râmâyana, one of the wives of King Sâgara gives birth to a son who continues the race; the other wife produces an Ikshvâku, a gourd or cane containing sixty thousand sons. The famous Chandragupta was miraculously preserved by the founder of his race, the bull Chando.[4] The wolf is in the same way traditionally connected with the settlement of the Janwâr Râjputs in Oudh, and they believe that the animal never preys on their children. Every native believes that children are reared in the dens of wolves, and there is a certain amount of respectable evidence in support of the belief.[5]

[1] "Totemism," 3 sqq. [2] Yule, "Marco Polo," i. 52.
[3] Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," 251.
[4] Max Müller, "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," 290.
[5] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 10; ii. 215; iii. 144; Ball, "Jungle Life," 455 sqq.

Similar examples are numerous among the Drâvidian tribes. The Cheros of the Vindhyan plateau claim descent from the Nâga or dragon. The Râja and chief members of the Chota Nâgpur family wear turbans so arranged as to make the head-dress resemble a serpent coiled round the skull, with its head projecting over the wearer's brow. The seal of the Mahârâja and the arms of his family show as a crest a cobra with a human face under its expanded hood, surrounded with all the insignia of royalty. The Santâl legend ascribes the origin of the tribe to the wild goose, and similar stories are told by the family of the Râja of Sinhbhûm, the Hos, the Malers, and the Kûrs.[1]

## SPECIAL RESPECT PAID TO THE TOTEM.

Next come instances of special respect paid to the totem. Some idea of the kind may be partly the origin of the worship of the cow and the serpent. Dr. Ball describes how some Khândhs refused to carry the skin of a leopard because it was their totem.[2] The Kadanballis of Kanara will not eat the Sâmbhar stag, the Bargaballis the Barga deer, and the Kuntiballis the woodcock. The Vaydas of Cutch worship the monkey god whom they consider to be their ancestor, and to please him in their marriage ceremony, the bridegroom goes to the bride's house dressed up as a monkey and there leaps about in monkey fashion.[3] It is possibly from regard to the totem that the Parihâr Râjputs of Râjputâna will not eat the wild boar, but they have now invented a legend that one of their princes went into a river while pursuing a boar and was cured of a loathsome disease.[4] There is a Celtic legend in which a child is turned into a pig, and Gessa is laid on Diarmid not to kill a pig, as it has the same span of life as himself.[5]

The Bengal Bâwariyas take the heron as their emblem, and must not eat it.[6] The Orissa Kumhârs abstain from

[1] Dalton "Descriptive Ethnology," 126, 162, 165 sq., 179 185, 209, 231, 265.
[2] "Jungle Life," 600.
[3] Campbell, "Notes," 7.
[4] "Râjputâna Gazetteer," i. 223.
[5] Rhys, "Lectures," 508.
[6] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 327.

eating, and even worship the Sâl fish, because the rings on its scales resemble the wheel which is the symbol of their craft. The peacock is a totem of the Jâts and of the Khândhs, as the Yizidis worship the Tâous, a half mythical peacock, which has been connected with the Phœnix which Herodotus saw in Egypt.[2] The Parhaiyas have a tradition that their tribe used to hold sheep and deer sacred, and used the dung of these animals instead of cowdung to plaster their floors. So the Kariyas do not eat the flesh of sheep, and may not even use a woollen rug. The same prohibition of meats appears to be a survival of totemism in Arabia.[3]

## THE DEVAK.

One of the best illustrations of this form of totemism is that of the Devak or family guardian gods of Berâr and Bombay. Before concluding an alliance, the Kunbi and other Berâr tribes look to the Devak, which literally means the deity worshipped at marriage ceremonies; the fact being that certain families hold in honour particular trees and plants, and at the marriage ceremony branches of these trees are set up in the house. It is said that a betrothal, in every other respect irreproachable, will be broken off if the two houses are discovered to pay honour to the same tree, in other words if they worship the same family totem and hence must belong to one and the same endogamous group.[4]

The same custom prevails in Bombay. "The usual Devaks are some animals, like the elephant, stag, deer, or cock, or some tree, as the Jambul, Ber, Mango, or Banyan. The Devak is the ancestor or the head of the house, and so families which have the same guardian do not intermarry. If the Devak be an animal, its flesh is not eaten; but if it be a fruit tree, the use of the fruit generally is not forbidden, though some families abstain from eating the fruit of the tree which forms their Devak or badge."[5] Mr. Campbell

[1] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," Introduction, xlvii.
[2] Conway, "Demonology," i. 27; "Herodotus," ii. 73.
[3] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 131, note; Ball, *loc. cit.*, 89; Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 306 sq.
[4] "Berâr Gazetteer," 187.
[5] Campbell, "Notes," 8 sqq.

gives numerous examples of these family totems, such as wheat bread, a shell, an earthen pot, an axe, a Banyan tree, an elephant. Oil-makers have as their totem an iron bar, or an oil-mill; scent-makers use five piles, each of five earthen pots, with a lighted lamp in the middle. The Bangars' Devak is a conch-shell, that of the Pardesi Râjputs an earthen pot filled with wheat, and so on. Many of these are probably tribal or occupational fetishes, of which instances will be given in another place.

## THE VÂHANAS AND AVATÂRAS.

Some have professed to find indications of totemism in the Vâhanas and Avatâras, the "Vehicles" and the "Incarnations" of the mythology; but this is far from certain. It has been suggested that these may represent tribal deities imported into Hinduism. Brahma rides on the Hansa or goose; Vishnu on Garuda, half eagle and half man, which is the crest of the Chandravansi Râjputs; Siva on his bull Nandi; Yama on a buffalo; Kârttikeya on a peacock; Kâmadeva on the marine monster Makara, or on a parrot; Agni on a ram; Varuna on a fish. Ganesa is accompanied by his rat, whence his name Akhuratha, "rat-borne." This an ingenious comparative mythologist makes out to represent "the pagan Sun god crushing under his feet the mouse of night."[1] Vâyu rides on an antelope, Sani or Saturn on a vulture, and Durgâ on a tiger.

The same is the case with the Avatâras or incarnations of the deities. Vishnu appears in the form of Vârâha, the boar; Kurma, the tortoise; Matsya, the fish; Nara Sinha, the man-lion; Kalki, the white horse. Rudra and Indra are also represented in the form of the boar.

## THE BOAR AS A TOTEM.

How the boar came to be associated with Vishnu has been much disputed. One and not a very plausible explanation

[1] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 68; and see Lang, "Custom and Myth," 113.

which has been suggested is that it is because the boar is a destroyer of snakes.[1] We know that in Râjputâna there was a regular spring festival at which the boar was killed because he was regarded as the special enemy of Gaurî, the Râjput tribal goddess.[2]

The comparative mythologists account for the spring boar festival by connecting it with the ceremonial eating of the boar's head at Christmas in Europe, as a symbol of the gloomy monster of winter, killed at the winter solstice, after which the days get longer and brighter.[3] Mr. Frazer explains it by the killing of the Corn Spirit in the form of the boar.[4]

But it is, perhaps, simpler to believe with Sir A. Lyall[5] that "when the Brâhmans convert a tribe of pig-worshipping aborigines, they tell their proselytes that the pig was an Avatâr of Vishnu. The Mînas in one part of Râjputâna used to worship the pig. When they took a turn towards Islâm they changed their pig into a saint called Father Adam, and worshipped him as such." Mr. Frazer has pointed out that the "customs of the Egyptians touching the pig are to be explained as based upon an opinion of the extreme sanctity rather than of the extreme uncleanness of the animal; or rather to put it more correctly, they imply that the animal was looked on not simply as a filthy and a disgusting creature, but as a being endowed with high supernatural powers, and that as such it was regarded with that primitive sentiment of religious awe and fear in which the feelings of reverence are almost equally blended."

There are indications of the same belief in India. Thus, in Baghera "the boar is a sacred animal, and the natives there say that if any man were to kill a wild boar in the neighbourhood, he would be sure to die immediately afterwards, while no such fatal result would follow if the same man killed a boar anywhere else."[6] In the same way the Prabhus of Bombay eat wild pork once a year as a religious

[1] Conway, "Demonology," i. 144.
[2] Tod, "Annals," i. 599.
[3] Gubernatis, *loc. cit.*, ii. 13.
[4] "Golden Bough," ii. 26 sqq., 58.
[5] "Asiatic Studies," 264.
[6] "Archæological Reports," vi. 137.

duty. The Vaddars of the Dakkhin say that they are not troubled with ghosts, because the pork they eat and hang in their houses scares ghosts. We know that among the Drâvidian races and many of the menial tribes of Hindustân the pig is the favourite offering to the local godlings and to the deities of disease. Swine's teeth are often worn by Hindu ascetics, and among the Kolarian races the women are forbidden to eat the flesh. In Northern India the chief place where the worship of Vishnu in his Vârâha or boar incarnation is localized is at Soron on the banks of the Bûrhî Gangâ, or old Ganges, in the Etah District. The name of the place has been derived from Sukarakshetra, "the place of the good deed," because here Vishnu slew the demon Hiranyakesu. It is certainly Sukarakshetra, "the plain of the hog."[1]

Garuda, another of these vehicles, is the wonder-working bird common to many mythologies—the Rukh of the Arabian Nights, the Eorosh of the Zend, the Simurgh of the Persians, the Anka of the Arabs, the Kargas of the Turks, the Kirni of the Japanese, the Dragon of China, the Norka of Russia, the Phœnix of classical fable, the Griffin of chivalry and of Temple Bar.

From totemism we get a clue to many curious usages, especially in the matter of food. From this idea probably arose the unclean beasts of the Hebrew ritual. Many Hindu tribes will not eat the onion or the turnip. Brâhmans and Bachgoti Râjputs object to potatoes. The Râjputs place a special value on the wood of the Nîm tree; one clan alone, the Raikwârs, are forbidden to use it as a tooth-stick. Some Kolarian tribes, as we have already seen, refuse to use the flesh or wool of the sheep. The Murmu, or Santâls of the blue bull sept, will not eat the flesh of that animal. The system of the Orâons is more elaborate still, for no sub-tribe can eat the plant or animal after which it is named. So, the Bansetti Binjhiyas, who take their name from the bamboo, do not touch the tree at a wedding; the Harbans Chamârs, who are said to be in

[1] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 88.

some way connected with a bone (*hadda*), cannot wear bones in any shape; the Rikhiâsan Chiks do not eat beef or pork; the Sanuâni Dhenuârs cannot wear gold; the Dhanuâr Khariyas cannot eat rice gruel. Numerous instances of this kind are given by Mr. Risley.[1] The transition from such observances and restrictions to the elaborate food regulations of the modern castes is not difficult.

## FETISHISM DEFINED.

Fetishism is "the straightforward, objective admiration of visible substances fancied to possess some mysterious influence or faculty. . . . The original downright adoration of queer-looking objects is modified by passing into the higher order of imaginative superstition. First, the stone is the abode of some spirit, its curious shape or position betraying possession. Next, the strange form or aspect argues some design or handiwork of supernatural beings, or is the vestige of their presence upon earth, and one step further leads us to the regions of mythology and heroic legend."[2] The unusual appearance of the object is thus supposed to imply an indwelling ghost, without which deviation from the ordinary type would be inexplicable. Hence fetishism depends on animism and the ghost theory, to which in order of time it must have succeeded.

## FETISHISM ILLUSTRATED IN AFGHÂNISTÂN.

The process by which the worship of such a fetish grows is well illustrated by a case from Afghânistân. "It is sufficient for an Afghân devotee to see a small heap of stones, a few rags, or some ruined tomb, something, in short, upon which a tale can be invented, to imagine at once that some saint is buried there. The idea conceived, he throws some more stones upon the heap and sticks up a pole or flag; those who come after follow the leader; more stones and

[1] "Tribes and Castes," ii. Appendix; Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 162, note, 213, 254.

[2] Lyall, "Asiatic Studies," 9 sq.

more rags are added; at last its dimensions are so considerable that it becomes the vogue; a Mullah is always at hand with a legend which he makes or had revealed to him in a dream; all the village believe it; a few pilgrims come; crowds follow; miracles are wrought, and the game goes on, much to the satisfaction of the holy speculator, who drives a good trade by it, till some other Mullah more cunning than himself starts a saint of more recent date and greater miraculous powers, when the traffic changes hands."[1]

The same process is daily going on before our eyes in Northern India, and it would be difficult to suggest anything curious or abnormal which the Hindu villager will not adopt as fetish.

## THE LORIK LEGEND.

The legend of Lorik is very popular among the Ahîr tribe, and has been localized in the Mirzapur District in a curious way which admirably illustrates the principles which we have been discussing. The story is related at wearisome length, but the main features of it, according to the Shâhâbâd version, are as follows: Siudhar, an Ahîr, marries Chandanî, and is cursed by Pârvatî with the loss of all passion. Chandanî forms an attachment for her neighbour Lorik and elopes with him. The husband pursues, fails to induce her to return, fights Lorik and is beaten. The pair go and meet Mahapatiya, a Dusâdh, the chief of the gamblers. He and Lorik play until the latter loses everything, including the girl. She urges that her jewels did not form part of the stake, and induces them to gamble again. She stands opposite Mahapatiya and distracts his attention by giving him a glance of her pretty ankles. Finally Lorik wins everything back. The girl then tells Lorik how she has been insulted, and Lorik with his mighty sword cuts off the gambler's head, when it and the body are turned into stone.

Lorik had been betrothed to a girl named Satmanâin, who was not of age and had not joined her husband. Lorik had an adopted brother named Semru. Lorik and Chan-

[1] Ferrier, "Caravan Journey," 186.

danî, after killing the gambler, went on to Hardoi, near Mongir, where Lorik defeated a Râja and conquered his country. Lorik was finally seized and put into a dungeon, whence he was released by the aid of the goddess Durgâ.

He again conquered the Râja, recovered Chandanî, had a son born to him, and gained considerable wealth. So they determined to return to their native land.

Meanwhile Semru, Lorik's brother by adoption, had been killed by the Kols and all his cattle and property were plundered. Lorik's real wife, Satmanâin, had grown into a handsome woman, but still remained in her father's house. Lorik was anxious to test her fidelity; so when she came to sell milk in his camp, not knowing her husband, he stretched a loin cloth across the entrance. All the other women stepped over it, but the delicacy of Satmanâin was so excessive that she would not put her foot across it. Lorik was pleased, and filling her basket with jewels, covered them with rice. When she returned, her sister saw the jewellery and charged her with obtaining them as the price of her dishonour. She indignantly denied the accusation, and her nephew, Semru's son, prepared to fight Lorik to avenge the dishonour of his aunt. Next day the matter was cleared up to the satisfaction of all parties.

Lorik then reigned with justice, and incurred the displeasure of Indra, who sought to destroy him. So the goddess Durgâ took the form of his mistress Chandanî and tempted him. He succumbed to her wiles, and she struck him so that his face turned completely round. Overcome by grief and shame, he went to Benares, and there he and his friends were turned into stone and sleep the sleep of magic at Manikarnika Ghât.

### THE MIRZAPUR VERSION.

The Mirzapur version is interesting from its association with fetishism. As you descend the Mârkundi Pass into the valley of the Son, you observe a large isolated boulder split into two parts, with a narrow fissure between them. Further on in the bed of the Son is a curious water-worn rock, which,

to the eye of faith, suggests a rude resemblance to a headless elephant. On this foundation has been localized the legend of Lorik, which takes us back to the time when the Aryan and the aboriginal Dasyu contended for mastery in the wild borderland. There was once, so the tale runs, a barbarian king who reigned at the fort of Agori, the frontier fortress on the Son. Among his dependents was a cowherd maiden, named Manjanî, who was loved by her clansman Lorik. He, with his brother Sânwar, came to claim her as his bride. The Râja insisted on enforcing the *Jus primae noctis*. The heroic brethren, in order to escape this infamy, carried off the maiden. The Râja pursued on his famous wild elephant, which Lorik decapitated with a single blow.

When they reached in their flight the Mârkundi Pass, the wise Manjanî advised Lorik to use her father's sword, which, with admirable forethought, she had brought with her. He preferred his own weapon, but she warned him to test both. His own sword broke to pieces against the huge boulder of the Pass, but Manjanî's weapon clave it in twain. So Lorik and his brother, with the aid of the magic brand, defeated the infidel hosts with enormous slaughter, and carried off the maiden in triumph.

If you doubt the story, there are the cloven boulder and the petrified elephant to witness to its truth, and both are worshipped to this day in the name of Lorik and his bride with offerings of milk and grain.

This tale embodies a number of incidents which constantly appear in the folk-tales. We have the gambling match in the Mahâbhârata and in the tale of Nala and Damayantî, as well as in the Celtic legend of the young king of Easaidh Ruadh.[1] The magic sword and the various fidelity tests appear both in the folk-tales of the East and West.

[1] Muir, "Ancient Sanskrit Texts," v. 425 sq.; Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales of Bengal," 193 sq., 277; Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," 48 sqq.; "Wideawake Stories," 277 sqq.; Campbell, "Popular Tales," i. 2; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 323; and for fidelity tests, Grimm, "Household Tales," i. 453; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 601; Clouston, "Popular Romances," i. 43, 173.

Of living creatures turned into stone we have many instances in connection with the Pândava legend, as in Cornwall, the granite rocks known as the "Merry Maidens" and the "Pipers" are a party who broke the Sabbath, were struck by lightning, and turned into stone.[1]

## JIRÂYÂ BHAVÂNÎ.

Of a similar type is Jirâyâ Bhavânî, who is worshipped at Jungail, south of the Son. In her place of worship, a cave on the hillside, the only representative of the goddess is an ancient rust-eaten coat of mail. This gives her name, which is a corruption of the Persian Zirah, meaning a coat of armour. Close by is a little stream, known as the Suaraiya, the meaning of which is, of course, assumed to be "Hog river," from the Hindi Sûar, a pig. Here we have all the elements of a myth. In one of the early fights between Hindu and Musalmân, a wounded hero of Islâm came staggering to the bank of the stream, and was about to drink, when he heard that its name was connected with what is an abomination to the true believer. So he preferred to die of thirst, and no one sees any incongruity in the fact that the armour of a martyr of the faith has become a form of the Hindu goddess. The shrine is now on its promotion. and Jirâyâ Bhavânî will be provided with a Sanskrit etymology and develop before long into a genuine manifestation of Kâlî.

## VILLAGE FETISH STONES.

It is hardly necessary to say that, as Sir J. Lubbock has shown, the worship of fetish stones prevails in all parts of the world.[2] There is hardly a village in Northern India without a fetish of this kind, which is very often not appropriated to any special deity, but represents the Grâmadevatâ

[1] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 352, note; "Wideawake Stories," 419 sqq.; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iv. 201; Knowles, "Folk-tales of Kashmîr," 192; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 123; Grimm, *loc. cit.*, ii. 400; Hunt. "Popular Romances," 178.

[2] Also see Rhys, "Lectures," 206; Lang, "Custom and Myth," 52.

or Gânw-devî, or Deohâr, the collective local divine cabinet which has the affairs of the community under its charge.

Why spirits should live in stones has been debated. Mr. Campbell perhaps presses the matter too far when he suggests that stones were by early man found to contain fire, and that heated stones being found useful in disease, cooking, and the like may have strengthened the idea. "The earliest theory was perhaps that as the life of the millet was in the millet seed and the life of the Mango tree was in the Mango stone, a human spirit could live in a rock or a pebble. The belief that the soul, or part of the soul of a man, lives in his bones, seems closely connected with the belief in the stone as a spirit house. Probably it was an early belief that the bones should be kept, so that if the spirit comes back and worries the survivors he may have a place to go to."[1]

It is quite possible that the worship of stocks and stones may not in all places be based on exactly the same train of ideas. To the ruder races, the more curious or eccentric the form of the stone is, the more likely it is to be the work and possibly the abode of a spirit, and in a stoneless land, like the Gangetic plain, any stone is a wonder, and likely to be revered. The conception of the worshipper will always vary in regard to it. To the savage it will be the actual home or the occasional resting-place of the spirit; to the idolater of more advanced ideas it will be little more than a symbol, which reminds him of the deity without shape or form whom he is bound to worship.

Other fetish stones, again, by their form prove that they are the work of another or a higher race. Thus, on the village fetish mounds we often find the carved relics of some Buddhistic shrine, or the prehistoric stone implements, which were the work of a forgotten people.

Lastly, many stones lend themselves directly to the needs of the phallic cultus.

One form of stone is regarded with special reverence, those that have holes or perforations. Among these may

[1] "Notes," 163.

be mentioned the Sâlagrâma, a sort of ammonite found in the Gandak river, which has perforations, said to be the work of the Vajrakîta insect and hence sacred to Vishnu. The story goes that the divine Nârâyana once wandered through the world in the form of the Vajrakîta or golden bee. The gods, attracted by his beauty, also took the form of bees, and whirled about him in such numbers that Vishnu, afraid of the consequences, assumed the form of a rock and stopped the moving of Garuda and the gods. On this Garuda, followed by all the gods, made each a separate dwelling in the rock for the conversion of the infidels. So the Cornish Milpreve, or adder stone which is a preservative against vipers, is a ball of coralline limestone, the sections in the coral being thought to be entangled young snakes.[1] In Italy, pieces of stalagmite full of cavities are valued as amulets.

The respect for these perforated stones rests, again, on the well-known principle that looking through a stone which has a hole bored through it improves the sight.

All over the world it is a recognized theory that creeping through the orifice in a perforated stone or under an arching stone or tree is a valuable remedy in cases of disease. Mr. Lane describes how women in Cairo walk under the stone on which the decapitated bodies of criminals are washed, in the hope of curing ophthalmia or procuring offspring. The woman must do this in silence, and with the left foot foremost.[2] In Cornwall, Mr. Hunt writes: "In various parts of the country there are, amongst the granitic masses, rocks which have fallen across each other, leaving small openings, or there are holes, low and narrow, extending under a pile of rocks. In nearly every case of this kind, we find it is popularly stated that any one suffering from rheumatism or lumbago would be cured if he crawled through the opening. In some cases nine times are insisted on to make the charm complete."[3] So, walking under a bramble which has formed a second root in the earth is a cure for rheumatism, and

[1] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 418. [2] "Modern Egyptians," i. 325.
[3] "Popular Romances," 177.

strumous children were passed nine times through a cleft ash tree, against the sun. The tree was then bound up, and if the bark grew the child was cured, if the tree died the death of the child was sure to follow.[1]

In the same way at many shrines it is part of the worship to creep through a narrow orifice from one side to the other. At Kankhal, worshippers at the temple of Daksha creep through a sort of tunnel from one side to the other. The same is the rule at the temple at Kabraiya in the Hamîrpur District, and at many other places of the same kind.[2]

The same principle probably accounts for the respect paid to the grindstone. Part of the earliest form of the marriage ritual consisted in the bride standing on the family grindstone. At the present day she puts her foot upon it and knocks down little piles of heaped grain. It is waved over the heads of the pair to scare evil spirits. In Bombay it is said that sitting on a grindstone shortens life, and the Kunbis of Kolâba place a grindstone in the lying-in room, and on it set a rice flour image of a woman, which is worshipped as the goddess, and the baby is laid before it. Such a stone readily passes into a fetish, as at Ahmadnagar, where there is a stone with two holes, which any two fingers of any person's hand can fill, and the mosque where it stands is, in consequence, much respected.[3]

Much, however, of the worship of stones appears to be the result of the respect paid to the tombstone or cairn, which, as we have already said, keeps down the ghost of the dead man, and is often a place in which his spirit chooses to reside.

These rude stones are very often smeared with ruddle or red ochre. We have here a survival of the blood sacrifice of a human being or animal which was once universal.[4] Such sacrifices rest on the principle that it is necessary to supply attendants to the dead or to the tribal gods in the other

[1] "Popular Romances," 412, 415.
[2] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 173.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," xi. 56; xvii. 698.
[4] Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 49; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 306; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 164; Conway, "Demonology," ii. 284.

world; and the commutation of human sacrifices, first into those of animals, and then into a mere scarlet stain on the fetish stone, is a constantly recurring fact in the history of custom.[1] It may be worth while to discuss this transition from the Indian evidence.

## HUMAN SACRIFICE AMONG THE INDO-ARYANS.

That human sacrifice prevailed among the early Aryans in India is generally admitted. The whole question has been treated in detail by that eminent Hindu scholar, Rajendra Lâla Mitra. He arrives at the conclusion that, looking to the history of the ancient civilization and the ritual of the Hindus, there is nothing to justify the belief that the Hindus were incapable of sacrificing human victims to their gods; that the Sunasepha hymns of the Rig Veda Sanhita most probably refer to a human sacrifice; that the Aitareya Brâhmana refers to an actual and not to a typical human sacrifice; that the Parushamedha originally required the actual sacrifice of men; that the Taitareya Brâhmana enjoys the killing of a man at the horse sacrifice; that the Satapatha Brâhmana sanctions human sacrifice in some cases, but makes the Parushamedha emblematic; that the Purânas recognize human sacrifices to Chandikâ, but prohibit the Parushamedha rite; that the Tantras enjoin human sacrifices to Chandikâ, and require that when human victims are not available, an effigy of a human being should be sacrificed to her.[2]

## HUMAN SACRIFICE IN THE FOLK-TALES.

There is ample evidence from the folk-tales of the existence of human sacrifice in early times. We have in the tales of Somadeva constant reference to human sacrifices

[1] Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 268; Lang, "Custom and Myth," i. 270.

[2] "Indo-Aryans," ii. 70 sqq.; "Journal Asiatic Society, Bengal," 1876; Max Müller, "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," 408 sq.; Muir, "Ancient Sanskrit Texts," i., ii., *passim*; Wilson, "Rig Veda," i. 59, 63; "Essays," ii. 247 sqq.; Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 800, 867.

made in honour of Chandikâ or Châmuṇḍâ. We find one Muravara, a Turushka or Indo-Scythian, who proposes to make a human sacrifice in memory of his dead father; we have expiatory sacrifices to Chandikâ to save the life of a king. In one of the Panjâb tales a ship will not leave port till a human victim is offered. In one of the modern tales we have an account of a man and his family who sacrifice themselves before the god Jyoti Bara, "the great diviner," who is worshipped by the Sânsya gypsies.[1]

The folk-tales also disclose ample evidence of cannibalism. The Magian cannibals of the Book of Sindibad used to eat human flesh raw, and the same tale is told by Herodotus of the Massagetae, the Padaei of India, whom Col. Dalton identifies with the Birhors of Chota Nâgpur, and of the Essedones near Lake Moeotis.[2] It is needless to say that Indian folk-tales abound with references to the same practices. We have cannibal Râkshasas in abundance, and in one of Somadeva's stories Devaṣwâmin, the Brâhman, looks out and finds his "wife's mouth stained with blood, for she had devoured his servant and left nothing of him but the bones." And in the tale of Asokadatta we have a woman who climbs on a stake and cuts slices of the flesh of an impaled criminal, which she eats.[3] In the Mahâbhârata we find the legend of Kalmaṣhapada, who, while hunting, meets Saktri, son of Vasishtha, and strikes him with his whip. The incensed sage cursed him to become a cannibal. This curse was heard by Viswamitra, the rival of Vasishtha, and he so contrived that the body of the king became possessed by a man-eating Râkshasa. Kalmashapada devoured Saktri and the hundred sons of Vasishtha, who finally restored him to his original state. In a tale recently collected among the Drâvidian Mânjhis, a girl accidentally cuts her finger and some of the blood falls upon the greens, whereupon her

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 330; ii. 253, 338; Temple, "Wide-awake Stories," 147; Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 194; Miss Frere, "Old Deccan Days," 6; "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 111, 129; iii. 105.

[2] Burton, "Arabian Nights," iv. 376.

[3] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 212; ii. 616.

brothers, finding that it flavoured the mess, killed and devoured her.[1]

## HUMAN SACRIFICE IN MODERN TIMES.

Up to quite modern times the same was the case, and there is some evidence to show that the custom has not quite ceased.

Until the beginning of the present century, the custom of offering a first-born child to the Ganges was common. Akin to this is the Gangâ Jâtra, or murder of sick relatives on the banks of the sacred river, of which a case occurred quite recently at Calcutta. At Katwa, near Calcutta, a leper was burnt alive in 1812; he threw himself into a pit ten cubits deep which was filled with burning coals. He tried to escape, but his mother and sister thrust him in again and he was burnt. They believed that by so doing he would gain a pure body in the next birth.[2] Of this religious suicide in Central India, Sir J. Malcolm wrote: "Self-sacrifice of men is less common than it used to be, and the men who do it are generally of low tribes. One of their chief motives is that they will be born Râjas at their next incarnation. Women who have been long barren, vow their first child, if one be given to them, to Omkâr Mandhâta. The first knowledge imparted to the infant is this vow, and the impression is so implanted in his mind, that years before his death he seems like a man haunted by his destiny. There is a tradition that anyone saved after the leap over the cliff near the shrine must be made Râja of the place; but to make this impossible, poison is mixed with the last victuals given to the devoted man, who is compelled to carry out his purpose."[3]

The modern instances of human sacrifice among the Khândhs of Bengal and the Mers of Râjputâna are sufficiently notorious. It also prevailed among some of the Drâvidian tribes up to quite recent times. The Kharwârs,

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 65.
[2] Ibid., ii. 22.
[3] "Central India," ii. 210.

since adopting Hinduism, performed human sacrifices to Kâlî in the form of Chandî. Some of our people who fell into their hands during the Mutiny were so dealt with. The same was the case with the Bhuiyas, Khândhs, and Mundas. Some of the Gonds of Sarguja used to offer human sacrifice to Burha Deo, and still go through a form of doing so.[1] There is a recent instance quoted among the Tiyars, a class of boatmen in Benares; one Tonurâm sacrificed four men in the hope of recovering the treasures of seven Râjas; another man was killed to propitiate a Râkshasa who guarded a treasure supposed to be concealed in a house where the deed was committed.[2] About 1881 a village headman sacrificed a human being to Kâlî in the Sambalpur District, and a similar charge was made against the chief of Bastar not many years ago.

Of the Karhâda Brâhmans of Bombay, Sir J. Malcolm writes:[3] "The tribe of Brâhmans called Karhâda had formerly a horrid custom of annually sacrificing to their deities a young Brâhman. The Saktî is supposed to delight in human blood, and is represented with fiery eyes and covered with red flowers. This goddess holds in one hand a sword and in the other a battle-axe. The prayers of her votaries are directed to her during the first nine days of the Dasahra feast, and on the evening of the tenth a grand repast is prepared, to which the whole family is invited. An intoxicating drug is contrived to be mixed with the food of the intended victim, who is often a stranger whom the master of the house has for several months treated with the greatest kindness and attention, and sometimes, to lull suspicion, given him his daughter in marriage. As soon as the poisonous and intoxicating drug operates, the master of the house unattended takes the devoted person into the temple, leads him three times round the idol, and on his prostrating himself

[1] Campbell, "Khondistân," *passim;* Frazer, "Golden Bough," i. 384 sqq.; "Râjputâna Gazetteer," ii. 47; Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 130, 147, 176, 285 sq., 281.

[2] Chevers, "Medical Jurisprudence," 406, 411.

[3] Campbell, "Notes," 339; Wilson, "Indian Caste," ii. 22 sq.; "Bombay Gazetteer," x. 114.

before it, takes this opportunity of cutting his throat. He collects with the greatest care the blood in a small bowl, which he first applies to the lips of the ferocious goddess, and then sprinkles it over her body; and a hole having been dug at the feet of the idol for the corpse, he deposits it with great care to prevent discovery. After this the Karhâda Brâhman returns to his family, and spends the night in mirth and revelry, convinced that by the bloodthirsty act he has propitiated the goddess for twelve years. On the morning of the following day the corpse is taken from the hole in which it had been thrown, and the idol deposited till next Daśahra, when a similar sacrifice is made."

There seems reason to suspect that even in the present day such sacrifices are occasionally performed at remote shrines of Kâlî or Durgâ Devî. Within the last few years a significant case of the kind occurred at Benares. There are numerous instances from Nepâl.[1] At Jaypur, near Vizagapatam, the Râja is said, at his installation in 1861, to have sacrificed a girl to Durgâ.[2] A recent case of such sacrifice with the object of recovering hidden treasure occurred in Berâr; a second connected with witchcraft at Muzaffarnagar.[3] At Chanda and Lanji in the Province of Nâgpur, there are shrines to Kâlî at which human sacrifices to the goddess have been offered almost within the memory of this generation.

Besides the religious form of human sacrifice in honour of one of these bloodthirsty deities, there are forms of the rite which depend on the mystic power attributed to human flesh and blood in various charms and black magic.

In connection with human flesh a curious story is told of a man who went to bathe in the Ganges, and met one of the abominable Faqîrs known as Augars or Aghor-panthis, who carry about with them fragments of a human corpse. He saw the Faqîr cut off and eat a piece of the flesh of a corpse, and he then offered him a piece, saying

[1] Wright, "History," 11, note. [2] Ball, "Jungle Life," 580.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 112, 148. And for other instances, see Balfour, "Cyclopædia," iii. 477 sqq.

that if he ate it he would become enormously rich. He refused the ghastly food, and the Faqîr then threw a piece at him which stuck to his head, forming a permanent lump.[1] In one of the tales of Somadeva the witches are seen flying about in the air, and say, "These are the magic powers of witches' spells, and are due to the eating of human flesh." In another the hero exchanges an anklet with a woman for some human flesh.[2]

The same mysterious power is attributed to human blood. The blood of the Jinn has, it is hardly necessary to say, special powers of its own. Thus, in one of the Kashmîr stories the angel says: "This is a most powerful Jinn. Should a drop of his blood fall to the ground while life is in him, another Jinn will be quickly formed therefrom, and spring up and slay you."[3] Bathing in human blood has been regarded as a powerful remedy for disease. The Emperor Constantine was ordered a bath of children's blood, but moved by the prayers of the parents, he forbore to apply the remedy and was rewarded by a miraculous recovery. In one of the European folk-tales a woman desirous of offspring is directed to take a horn and cup herself, d w out a clot of blood, place it in a pot, lute it down and only uncover it in the ninth month, when a child would be found in the pot. In the German folk-tales, bathing in the blood of innocent maidens is a cure for leprosy.[4]

The same beliefs largely prevail in India. In 1870, a Musalmân butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu conjuror that if he washed his wife in the blood of a boy, his next infant would be healthy. To ensure this result a child was murdered. A similar case occurred in Muzaffarnagar, where a child was killed and the blood drunk by a barren woman.[5] In one of the tales of Somadeva the preg-

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 75.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 157, 214.
[3] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 2.
[4] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 294; Grimm, "Household Tales," i. 396; Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," i. 98.
[5] "Report Inspector-General Police, N.-W.P., 1870," page 93; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 205; iii. 74, 162: Chevers, "Medical Jurisprudence," 842, 396: Campbell, "Notes," 338.

nant queen asks her husband to gratify her longing by filling a tank with blood for her to bathe in. He was a righteous man, and in order to gratify her craving he had a tank filled with the juice of lac and other extracts, so that it seemed to be full of blood. In another tale the ascetic tells the woman that if she killed her young son and offered him to the divinity, another son would certainly be born to her. Quite recently at Muzaffarnagar a childless Jât woman was told that she would attain her desire if she bathed in water mixed with the blood of a Brâhman child. A Hindu coolie at Mauritius bathed in and drank the blood of a girl, thinking that thereby he would be gifted with supernatural powers. It would be easy to add largely to the number of instances of similar beliefs.[1]

## SURVIVALS OF HUMAN SACRIFICE.

There are, in addition, numerous customs which appear to be survivals of human sacrifice, or of the blood covenant, which also prevailed in Arabia.[2] Among the lower castes in Northern India the parting of the bride's hair is marked with red, a survival of the original blood covenant, by which she was introduced into the sept of her husband. We see that this is the case from the rites of the more savage tribes. Among the Kewats of Bengal, a tiny scratch is made on the little finger of the bridegroom's right hand and of the bride's left, and the drops of blood drawn from these are mixed with the food. Each then eats the food with which the other's blood has been mixed. Among the Santâls blood is drawn in the same way from the little finger of the bride and bridegroom, and with it marks are made on both above the clavicle.[3]

## HUMAN SACRIFICE AND BUILDINGS.

One standing difficulty at each decennial census has been the rumour which spreads in remote tracts that Government

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 148; iii. 71.
[2] Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 48 sq.
[3] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 456; Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 220.

is making the enumeration with a view of collecting victims to be sacrificed at some bridge or other building, or that a toll of pretty girls is to be taken to reward the soldiery after some war. Thus, about a fort in Madras it had long been a tradition that when it was first built a girl had been built into the wall to render it impregnable.[1] It is said that a Râja was once building a bridge over the river Jargo at Chunâr, and when it fell down several times he was advised to sacrifice a Brâhman girl to the local deity. She has now become the Marî or ghost of the place, and is regularly worshipped in time of trouble.[2] In Kumaun the same belief prevails, and kidnappers, known as Dokhutiya, or two-legged beasts of prey, are said to go about capturing boys for this purpose. In Kâthiâwâr, if a castle was being built and the tower would not stand, or if a pond had been dug and would not hold water, a human victim was offered.[3] The rumour that a victim was required spread quite recently in connection with the Hughli Bridge at Calcutta and the Benares water-works. The Narmadâ, it was believed, would never allow herself to be bridged until she carried away part of the superstructure, and caused the loss of lives as a sacrifice. At Ahmadâbâd, by the advice of a Brâhman, a childless Vânya was induced to dig a tank to appease the goddess Sîtalâ. The water refused to enter it without the sacrifice of a man. As soon as the victim's blood fell on the ground, the tank filled and the goddess came down from heaven and rescued the victim.[4] In building the fort of Sikandarpur in Baliya, a Brâhman and a Dusâdh girl were both immolated.[5] The Vadala lake in Bombay refused to hold water till the local spirit was appeased by the sacrifice of the daughter of the village headman. When the Shorkot fort was being built one side repeatedly fell down. A Faqîr advised the Râja to put a first-born son under the rampart. This was done and the wall stood. The child's mother went to Mecca, and returned with an army of Muhammadans; but they

[1] "Folk-lore," iv. 260.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 40.
[3] Ibid., 106.
[4] "Bombay Gazetteer," ii. 349; xiv. 49.
[5] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 194.

could not take the fort. Then a Faqîr transformed himself into a cock and flew on the roof of the palace, where he set up a loud crow. The Râja was frightened and abandoned the place. As he was leaving it, he shouted, "Shame on thee, O Fort! to remain standing!" and the walls at once fell down.[1]

## MODIFICATIONS OF HUMAN SACRIFICE.

There are also many instances of the transition from human sacrifices to those of a milder form. Thus, when Ahmadâbâd was building, Mânik Bâwa, a saint, every day made a cushion, and every night picked it to pieces. As he did so the day's work fell down. The Sultân refrained from sacrificing him, but got him into a small jar and kept him there till the work was over.[2] The Villâlis of Pûna on the fifteenth day after a death shape two bricks like human beings, dress them, and lay them on a wooden stool. They weep by them all night, and next day, taking them to the burning ground, cremate them. Among the Telugu Brâhmans of Pûna, if a man dies at an unlucky time, wheaten figures of men are made and burnt with the corpse. The Koṅkani Marâthas of Kanara on the feast of Raulnâth get a man to cut his hand with a knife and let three drops of blood fall on the ground.[3] Formerly in Hoshangâbâd, men used to swing themselves from a pole, as in the famous Bengal Charakh Pûjâ. In our territories this is now uncommon, as the village headmen being afraid of responsibility for an accident, generally, instead of a man, fasten up a white pumpkin, which they swing about.[4]

At the installation of a Bhuiya Râja, a man comes forward whom the Râja touches on the neck, as if about to

[1] For similar instances see "Archæological Reports," v. 98; "Bombay Gazetteer," xx. 144; "Folk-lore Records," iii. Part II. 182; "Oudh Gazetteer," iii. 253; "Indian Antiquary," xi. 117; "Calcutta Review," lxxvii. 106; Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 130; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 110; "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 27, 63, 93; Campbell, "Santâl Folk-tales," 106.

[2] "Bombay Gazetteer," iv. 276.

[3] Campbell, "Notes," 348.

[4] "Settlement Report," 126.

cut off his head. The victim disappears for three days; then he presents himself before the Râja, as if miraculously restored to life. Similarly, the Gonds, instead of a human sacrifice, now make an image of straw, which they find answers the purpose. The Bhuiyas of Keunjhar used to offer the head of their prime minister to Thakurânî Mâî. She is now transformed into the Hindu Durgâ and accepts a sacrifice of goats and sheep.[1] In Nepâl, after the Sithi Jâtra feast, the people divide into two parties and have a match at stone-throwing; formerly this used to be a serious matter, and any one who was knocked down and fell into the hands of the other side was sacrificed to the goddess Kankeswarî. The actual killing of the victim, as in the case of sacrifices to the goddess Bachhlâ Devî, has now been discontinued under the influence of British officers.[2] We shall meet later on in another connection other instances of mock fights of the same kind.

## MOMIÂÎ.

In connection with human sacrifice may be mentioned the curious superstition about Momiâî or mummy.

The virtues of human fat as a magical ointment appear all through folk-lore. Othello, referring to the handkerchief which he had given to Desdemona, says,—

> "It was dyed in the mummy which the skilful
> Conserved of maidens' hearts."

Writing of witches Reginald Scot says: "The devil teacheth them to make ointment of the bowels and members of children, whereby they ride in the air and accomplish all their desires. After burial they steal them out of their graves and seethe them in a cauldron till the flesh be made potable, of which they make an ointment by which they ride in the air." In Macbeth the first witch speaks of—

> "Grease that sweaten
> From the murderer's gibbet."

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[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 146, 281; Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 115.

[2] Wright, "History," 35 sq., 156, note, 126, 205, 265.

Indian witches are believed to use the same mystic preparation to enable them to fly through the air, as their European sisters are supposed to use the fat of a toad.[1] Human fat is believed to be specially efficacious for this purpose. In one of Somadeva's stories the Brâhman searches for treasure with a candle made of human fat in his hand.[2] One of the Mongol Generals Marco Polo tells us, was accused of boiling down human beings and using their fat to grease his mangonels; and Carpini says that when the Tartars cast Greek fire into a town they used to shoot human fat with it, in order to cause the fire to burn more quickly.[3] So, in Europe a candle of human fat is said to have been used by robbers with the Hand of Glory to prevent the inmates waking, and on the Scotch border the torch used in the mystic ceremony of "saining" was made from the fat of a slaughtered enemy.

In India, the popular idea about Momiâî is that a boy, the fatter and blacker the better, is caught, a small hole is bored in the top of his head, and he is hung up by the heels over a slow fire. The juice or essence of his body is in this way distilled into seven drops of the potent medicine known as Momiâî.

This substance possesses healing properties of a supernatural kind. Sword cuts, spear thrusts, wounds from arrows and other weapons of warfare are instantly cured by its use, and he who possesses it is practically invulnerable. In Kumaun, this substance is known as Nârâyan Tel or Râm Tel, the "oil of Vishnu or Râma."

It is further believed that a European gentleman, known as the Momiâî-wâla Sahib, has a contract from Government of the right of enticing away suitable boys for this purpose. He makes them smell a stick or wand, which obliges them to follow him, and he then packs them off to some hill station where he carries on this nefarious manufacture.

As an instance of this belief, "A very black servant of a

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 594. [2] Ibid., i. 306
[3] Yule, "Marco Polo," ii. 165.
[4] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 54, 200 sqq.

friend of mine states that he had a very narrow escape from this Sâhib at the Nauchandi fair at Meerut, where Government allows him to walk about for one day and make as many suitable victims as he can by means of his stick. The Sâhib had just put his hand in his pocket and taken out the stick, which was dry and shrivelled and about a span long, when the servant with great presence of mind held out his hands and said, '*Bas! Bas!*' 'Enough! enough!' Thus intimidated, the Sâhib went away into the crowd. In connection with Momiâî, a lady here narrowly escaped a very uncanny reputation. Some of her servants gave out that she possessed a Momiâî stick, for which she had paid a hundred rupees. On hearing this an inquiry was made which brought out that the lady had missed a pod of vanilla about seven inches long, of a very special quality, that she kept rolled up in a piece of paper among some of her trinkets. The ayah who mislaid it was scolded for her carelessness, and told that it was worth more than she thought. She promptly put two and two together. The shrivelled appearance which is supposed to be peculiar to mysterious sticks, such as snake charmers produce, the fuss made about it, and the value attached to it convinced her that her mistress owned a Momiâî stick."[1]

These mystic sticks appear constantly in folk-lore. We have the caduceus of Hermes, the rod of Moses, the staff of Elisha, the wand of Circe, or of Gwydion or Skirni. In one of Somadeva's tales the Kapâlika ascetic has a magic stick which dances. In one of the Kashmîr tales the magic wand placed under the feet of the prince makes him insensible, when laid under his head he revives. Many people in England still believe in the divining rod which points out concealed springs underground.[2]

Every native boy, particularly those who are black and fat, believes himself a possible victim to the wiles of the dreaded Momiâî Sâhib, who frequents hill stations because

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 190.

[2] Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 485; Knowles, "Kashmîr Tales," 199; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 88; Rhys, "Lectures," 241; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 612.

he is thus enabled to carry on his villainous practices with comparative impunity and less danger of-detection. Even to whisper the word Momiâî is enough to make the crowd of urchins who dog the steps of a district officer when he is on his rounds through a town, disperse in dismay. Surgeons are naturally exposed to the suspicion of being engaged in this awful business, and some years ago most of the coolies deserted one of the hill stations, because an enthusiastic anatomist set up a private dissecting-room of his own. Freemasons, who are looked on by the general native public as a kind of sorcerers or magicians, are also not free from this suspicion. That such ideas should prevail among the rural population of India is not to be wondered at, when in our own modern England it is very commonly believed that luminous paint is made out of human fat.[1]

## THE DÂNAPURWÂLA SÂHIB.

Another of these dreaded Sâhibs is the Dânapurwâla Sâhib, or gentleman from Dinapur. Why this personage should be connected with Dinapur, a respectable British cantonment, no one can make out. At any rate, it is generally believed that he has a contract from Government for procuring heads for some of the museums, and he too has a magic stick with which he entices unfortunate travellers on dark nights and chops off their heads with a pair of shears. The influence of these magic wands by smelling may perhaps be associated with the fact that the nose is a spirit entry, as we have seen in the case of sneezing.

## FETISH STONES.

To return after this digression to fetish stones. Of this phase of belief we have well-known instances in the coronation stone in Westminster Abbey, which is associated

[1] "Folk-lore Record," iii. Part II. 283. For the commonplace Momiâî which is used as an application by women before parturition, see Watt's "Dictionary of Economic Products," ii. 115.

with the dream of Jacob, and the Hajuru'l Aswad of Mecca, which Sir R. Burton believed to be an aërolite. No one will bring a stone from the Sacred Hill at Govardhan near Mathura, because it is supposed to be endowed with life. The Yâdavas, who are connected with the same part of the country, had a stone fetish, described in the Vishnu Purâna, which brought rain and plenty. There are numerous legends connected with many of these fetish stones, such as that in the temple of Daksha at Kankhal and Gorakhnâtha in Kheri,[1] which are said to owe the fissures in them to the blow of the battle-axe or sword of one of the iconoclast Muhammadan Emperors. Of Gorakhnâtha it is said that Aurangzeb attempted to drag up the great Lingam, and failed to do so even with the aid of elephants. When he came to investigate the cause of his failure, tongues of flame burst from the bottom of the pillar.

The stalactites in the Behâr Hills are regarded as the images of the gods.[2] The pestle and mortar in which a noted Darvesh of Oudh used to grind his drugs are now worshipped, and a leading family in the Lucknow District keep before their family residence a large square stone which they reverence. They say that their ancestors brought it from Delhi, and that it is the symbol of their title to the estates, which were granted to them by one of the Emperors. He enjoined them to take it as the foundation of their settlement, and since that time each new Râja on his accession presents flowers, sweetmeats, and money to it.[3]

A great rock in the river above Badarinâth, the famous shrine in the Hills, is worshipped as Brahm Kapâl or the skull of Brahma, and Nandâ Devî, the mountain goddess of the Himâlaya, is worshipped in the form of two great stones glittering with mica, and reflecting the rays of the sun.[4] At Amosi in the Lucknow District they worship at marriages and birth of boys the door-post of the house of an old Râjput leader, named Binâik, who is honoured with the

[1] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 284.
[2] Buchanan, "Eastern India," i. 526.
[3] "Oudh Gazetteer," i. 303; ii. 415.
[4] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 311, note, 792 sq.

title of Bâba or "father."[1] At Deodhûra in the Hills the grey granite boulders near the crest of the ridge are said to have been thrown there in sport by the Pândavas. Close to the temple of Devî at the same place are two large boulders, the uppermost of which is called Ransila, or "the stone of battle," and is cleft through the centre by a deep, fresh-looking fissure, at right angles to which is a similar rift in the lower rock. A small boulder on the top is said to have been the weapon with which Bhîmsen produced these fissures, and the print of his five fingers is still to be seen upon it. Ransila itself is marked with the lines for playing the gambling game of Pachîsi, which, though it led to their misfortunes, the Pândavas even in their exile could not abandon. There are many places where the marks of the hoofs of the horse of Bhîmsen are shown.[2] "One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers."[3]

## FETISHES AMONG THE SANTÂLS.

The Santâls, like all uncivilized races, have a whole army of fetishes. A round piece of wood, nearly a foot in length, the top of which is painted red, is called Banhî, or "the protector of the jungle." Another stands for Laghû, the goddess of the earth, who is sometimes represented by a mountain. An oblong piece of wood, painted red, stands for Mahâmâî, "the great Mother," Devî's daughter; a small piece of white stone daubed with red is Burhiyâ Mâî, or "the old Mother," her granddaughter; an arrow-head stands for Dûdhâ Mâî, "the milk Mother," the daughter of Burhiyâ; a trident painted red represents the monkey god Hanumân, who executes all the orders of Devî. "Sets of these symbols are placed, one on the east and one on the

[1] "Oûdh Gazetteer," i. 61. [2] "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 282.
[3] Macaulay, "Battle of Lake Regillus," Introduction.

west of their huts to protect them from evil spirits, snakes, tigers, and all sorts of misfortune."[1]

Very similar to this is the worship of Bîrnâth, the fetish of the Mirzapur Ahîrs. His platform, which is made of clay, usually contains one, three, or five rude wooden images, each about three feet high, with a rough representation of a human face sculptured on the top. He was, it is said, an Ahîr who was killed by a tiger, and he is now worshipped by them in times of trouble. His special function is to protect the cattle from beasts of prey. The worshipper bathes, plasters his platform with fresh clay, and laying his offering on it, says: "Bîrnâth! Keep our cattle safe and you will get more." The same form of worship prevails all along the Central Indian Hills. "In the south of the Bhandâra District the traveller frequently meets with squared pieces of wood, each with a rude figure carved in front, set up close to each other. These represent Bangarâm, Bangarâ Bâî, or Devî, who is said to have one sister and five brothers, the sister being styled Kâlî, and four out of the five brothers being known as Gantarâm, Champarâm, Nâikarâm, and Potlinga. They are all deemed to possess the power of sending disease and death upon men, and under these or other names seem to be generally feared in the region east of Nâgpur. Bhîmsen, again, is generally adored under the form of one or two pieces of wood standing three or four feet in length above the ground, like those set up in connection with Bangarâm's worship."[2]

## FETISH STONES WHICH CURE DISEASE.

Many of these stones have the power of curing disease, and the water with which they have been bathed is considered a useful medicine. This is the case with a number of sacred Mahâdeva Lingams all over the country. A common proverb speaks of the old woman who is ready enough to eat the Prasâd or offering to the god, but hesitates

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 220.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 2.

to drink the water in which his feet have been washed. In Western India no orthodox Brâhman will eat his food till he has thrice sipped the water in which his Sâlagrâma stone has been washed.[1] We have already noticed the fetish bowl, the washings of which are administered by midwives to secure easy parturition. So, in Western lands the stones fetched by Merlin had the power of healing if washed in water and the patient bathed in it.[2] Stone celts are, in Cornwall, supposed to impart a healing effect to water in which they have been soaked.[3] In Java a decoction of the lichen which grows on fetish stones is used as a remedy for disease.[4] In the Isle of Lewis cattle disease is attributed to the bites of serpents, and the suffering animals are made to drink water into which charm stones are put; in the Highlands large crystals of a somewhat oval shape were kept by the priests to work charms with, and water poured thereon was given to cattle as a preventative of disease.[5]

## FETISH STONES THE ABODE OF SPIRITS.

The virtue of all these fetish stones rests in their embodying the spirits of gods or deified men. As we have shown, this is a common principle of popular belief. In one of Miss Stokes's Indian tales, "The man who went to seek his fate," the fate is found in stones, some standing up and some lying down. The man beats the stone which embodies his fate because he is miserably poor. Mr. H. Spencer thinks that the idea of persons being turned into stones may have arisen from instances of actual petrifaction of trees and the like; but this is not very probable, and it is much simpler to believe with Dr. Tylor that it depends on the principles of animism.[6]

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 30. [2] Rhys, "Lectures," 193.
[3] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 427.
[4] Forbes, "Wanderings of a Naturalist," 103.
[5] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 165; Brand, "Observations," 621.
[6] "Principles of Sociology," i. 109 sq., 310; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 353.

## FAMILY FETISHES.

Some fetishes, like the Bombay Devaks, are special to particular families. Such is the case with the Thârus, a non-Aryan tribe in the sub-Himâlayan Tarâî. Each member of the tribe constructs a hollow mound in front of his door, and thereon erects a stake of Palâsa wood (*Butea frondosa*), which is regarded as the family fetish and periodically worshipped.

## TOOL FETISHES.

Next comes the worship of the tool fetish, which, according to Sir A. Lyall, is "the earliest phase or type of the tendency which later on leads those of one guild or walk in life to support and cultivate one god, who is elected in lieu of the individual trade fetishes melted down to preside over their craft or trade interests."[1]

A good example of this is the pickaxe fetish of the Thags.

When Kâlî refused to help them in the burial of their victims she gave them one of her teeth for a pickaxe, and the hem of her lower garment for a noose. Hence the pickaxe was venerated by the Thags. Its fabrication was superintended with the utmost care, and it was consecrated with many ceremonies. A lucky day was selected, and a smith was appointed to forge it with the most profound secrecy. The door was closed against all intruders; the leader never left the forge while the manufacture was going on; and the smith was allowed to do no other work until this was completed. Next came the consecration. This was done on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday, and care was taken that the shadow of no living thing fell upon the axe. The consecrator sat with his face to the west, and received the implement in a brass dish. It was then washed in water which was allowed to fall into a pit made for the purpose. Then further ablutions followed, the first in sugar and water, the second in sour milk, and the third in spirits. The axe was then marked from the head to the point with

[1] "Asiatic Studies," 16.

seven spots of red lead, and replaced on the brass dish with a cocoanut, some cloves, white sandalwood, and other articles.

A fire was next made of cowdung and the wood of the Mango and Ber tree. All the articles deposited on the brass plate, with the exception of the cocoanut, were thrown into the fire, and when the flame rose the Thag priest passed the pickaxe with both hands seven times through the fire. The cocoanut was then stripped of its husk and placed on the ground. The officiant, holding the axe by the point, asked: "Shall I strike?" The bystanders assented, and he then broke the cocoanut with the blunt end of the weapon, exclaiming, "All hail, Devî! Great Mother of us all!" The spectators responded, "All hail, Devî, and prosper the Thags." If the cocoanut was not broken at one blow, all the labour was lost; the goddess was considered unpropitious, and the entire ceremony had to be repeated. The broken shell and kernel of the cocoanut were then thrown into the fire, the pickaxe wrapt in white cloth was placed on the ground towards the west, and all present prostrated themselves before it.[1]

Here we have another example of magic in its sympathetic form, the use of sundry spirit scarers, which have been already discussed, and the cocoanut representing an actual human victim.

## WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENT FETISHES.

In the same way soldiers and warlike tribes worship their weapons. Thus, the sword was worshipped by the Râjputs, and when a man of lower caste married a Râjput girl, she was married, as in the case of Holkar, to his sword with his kerchief bound round it.[2] This sword-worship is specially performed, as by the Baiswârs of Mirzapur and the Gautam sept of Râjputs. The Nepâlese worship their weapons and regimental colours at the Dasahra festival. At the Diwâlî,

[1] "Illustrations of the History and Practice of the Thags," 46 sqq.
[2] Tod, "Annals," i. 615; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 221.

or feast of lamps, on the first day they worship dogs; on the second day cows and bulls; on the third day capitalists worship their treasure under the name of Lakshmî, the goddess of wealth; on the fourth day every householder worships as deities the members of his family, and on the fifth day sisters worship their brothers.[1]

The same customs prevail among the artisan castes in Northern India. The hair-scraper of the tanner is worshipped by curriers, and the potter's wheel, regarded as a type of productiveness, is reverenced at marriages by many of the lower castes. Even the clay which has been mixed by the potter has mystic powers. When a person has been bitten by a mad dog, a lump of this clay is brought, and the wound is touched with it while a spell is recited.[2] Carpenters worship their yard measure; Chamârs swear by the shoemaker's last, and the children of the Darzi or tailor are made to worship the scissors.

In Bengal, the Alakhiya sect of Saiva ascetics profess profound respect for their alms-bag; the carpenters worship their adze, chisel, and saw; the barbers their razors, scissors, and mirror. At the Srîpanchamî, or fifth day of the month of Mâgh, the writer class worship their books, pens, and inkstand. The writing implements are cleaned, and the books, wrapped in white cloth, are strewn over with flowers and the leaves of young barley.[3]

The same customs prevail in Bombay. A mill is the Devak or guardian of oil-makers; dancing girls worship a musical instrument; jewellers worship their pincers and blowpipe; curriers worship an axe, and market gardeners a pair of scales.[4]

In the Panjâb, farmers worship their oxen in August, their plough at the Dasahra festival, and they have a ceremony at the end of October to drive away ticks from their cattle; shepherds worship their sheep at the full moon of

[1] Oldfield, "Sketches," 344, 352.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 54.
[3] Wilson, "Essays," ii. 188; Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 16, 67, 93, 451.
[4] Campbell, "Notes," 9.

July; bankers and clerks worship their books at the Diwâlî festival; grain-sellers worship their weights at the Dasahra, Diwâlî, and Holî, and, in a way, every morning as well. Oilmen worship their presses at odd times; artisans salute their tools daily when they bathe; and generally the means of livelihood, whatever they may be, are worshipped with honour at the Diwâlî, Dasahra, and Holî.[1] So the Pokharna Brâhmans, who are said to have been the navvies who originally excavated the lake at Pushkar, worship in memory of this the Kudâla, or mattock.[2]

All these customs are as old as the time of the Chaldeans, "who sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat and their meat plenteous."[3]

Among these implement fetishes the corn-sieve and the plough, the basket, the broom, and the rice-pounder are of special importance.

## THE CORN-SIEVE.

The corn-sieve or winnowing basket, the *Mystica vannus Iacchi* of Virgil, has always enjoyed a reputation as an emblem of increase and prosperity, and as possessing magical powers. The witch in Macbeth says :—

> "Her husband's to Aleppo gone, Master of the *Tiger*;
> But in a sieve I'll thither sail."

It was used in Scotland to foretell the future at Allhallow Eve. Divination was performed with a pair of shears and a sieve. Aubrey describes how "the shears are stuck in a sieve, and the maidens hold up the sieve with the top of their fingers by the handle of the shears, then say, 'By St. Peter and St. Paul, he hath not stolen it.' After many adjurations the sieve will turn at the name of the thief."[4]

In India the sieve is the first cradle of the baby, and in

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 20 sq., 93.
[2] Tod, "Annals," ii. 320.
[3] Habakkuk i. 16; Isaiah xxi. 5.
[4] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 400; Brand, "Observations," 209, 773; Aubrey, "Remaines," 25.

Bombay the winnowing fan in which a newly-born child is laid is used on the fifth day for the worship of Satvâî. This makes it impure, and it is henceforward used only for the house sweepings. In Northern India, when a mother has lost a child, she puts the next in a sieve and drags it about, calling it Kadheran or Ghasîtan, "the dragged one," so as to baffle the Evil Eye by a pretence of contempt.

All through Upper India, at low-caste marriages, the bride's brother accompanies the pair as they revolve in the marriage shed, and sprinkles parched grain over them out of a sieve as a charm for good luck and a means of scaring the demon which causes barrenness. So Irish brides in old times used to be followed by two attendants bearing high over the heads of the couple a sieve filled with meal, a sign of the plenty that would be in the house, and an omen of good luck and the blessing of children.[1] We have already seen that this rite survives in the custom of flinging rice over the newly-married pair as they leave for the honey-moon.

This habit of scaring the spirits of evil by means of the sieve appears in a special usage at the Diwâlî festival. Very early in the morning the house-mother takes a sieve and a broom, and beats them in every corner of the house, exclaiming, "God abide, and poverty depart!" The fan is then carried outside the village, generally to the east or north, and being thrown away, is supposed, like the scape-goat, to bear away with it the poverty and distress of the household. The same custom prevails in Germany. The Posterli is imagined to be a spectre in the shape of an old woman. In the evening the young fellows of the village assemble, and with loud shouts and clashing of tins, ring-ing of cow-bells and goat-bells, and cracking of whips, tramp over hill and dale to another village, where the young men receive them with like uproar. One of the party re-presents the Posterli, or they draw it in a sledge in the shape of a puppet, and leave it standing in a corner of the

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 116.

other village. In the same way the Eskimo drive the demon Tuna out of their houses.[1]

Among the Kols, when a vacancy occurs in the office of the village priest, the winnowing fan with some rice is used, and by its magical power it drags the person who holds it towards the individual on whom the sacred mantle has fallen. The same custom prevails among the Orâons.[2]

The Greeks had a special name, Koskinomantis, for the man who divined in this way with the sieve, and the practice is mentioned by Theocritus.[3] The sieve is very commonly used in India as a rude form of the planchette. Through the wicker-work of the raised side or back a strong T-shaped twig is fixed, one end of which rests on the finger. A question is asked, and according as the sieve turns to the right or left, the answer is "Yes" or "No." This is exactly what is known as "Cauff-riddling" in Yorkshire and Scotland.[4] In the eastern districts of the North-Western Provinces, when the Ojha or "cunning man" is called in to cure disease, or possession by evil spirits, he puts some sesamum into a sieve, shakes it about, and then proceeds to identify the ghost concerned by counting the number of grains which remain stuck between the reeds. At a Santâl cremation, a man takes his seat near the ashes, and tosses rice on them with a winnowing fan till a frenzy appears to seize him, and he becomes inspired and says wonderful things.[5]

It is one of the curiosities of comparative folk-lore that this instrument should be credited with magical powers all over two continents.[6]

The winnowing basket, again, perhaps from its associa-

[1] Grimm, "Teutonic Mythology," 934; Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 164.

[2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 187, note, 247.

[3] "Idylls," iii. 31.

[4] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 52; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 43, 92.

[5] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 218.

[6] "Academy," 23rd July, 1887; "Gentleman's Magazine," July, 1887; Henderson, *loc. cit.*, 233; Brand, "Observations," 233; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 207.

tion, like the winnowing fan, with the sacred grain, has mystic powers. In Scotland it was used in the rite of creeling as a means of scaring barrenness. "The young wedded pair, with their friends, assemble in a convenient spot. A small creel or basket is prepared for the occasion, into which they put some stones; the young men carry it alternately, and allow themselves to be caught by the maidens, who have a kiss when they succeed. After a great deal of innocent mirth and pleasantry, the creel falls at length to the young husband's share, who is obliged generally to carry it for a long time, none of the young women having compassion upon him. At length his fair mate kindly relieves him from his burden; and her complaisance, in this particular, is considered as a proof of her satisfaction at the choice she has made.[1]"

In Bengal, at the full moon immediately following the Durgâ Pûjâ, the festival of Lakshmî, the goddess of wealth, is held. In every Hindu house a basket, which serves as the representative of prosperity, is set up and worshipped. This basket, or corn measure, is filled with paddy, encircled with a garland of flowers, and covered with a piece of cloth. They sit up all night and watch for Lakshmî to arrive, and any negligence in watching is believed to bring misfortune on the family.[2]

## THE BROOM.

The same idea applies to the broom used in sweeping the house or collecting the grain on the threshing-floor. We have already seen the use of it to drive out poverty. "Pythagoras warned his followers against stepping over a broom. In some parts of Bavaria, housemaids in sweeping out the house are careful not to step over the broom for fear of the witches. Again, it is a Bavarian rule not to step over a broom while a confinement is taking place in a house; otherwise the birth will be tedious, and the child will always remain small with a large head. But if anyone

[1] Brand, "Observations," 354.

[2] "Calcutta Review," xviii. 60.

has stepped over a broom inadvertently, he can undo the spell by stepping backwards over it again."[1] So, in Bombay, they say you should never step over a broom, or you will cause a woman to suffer severely in childbed.

In Bombay, some old Hindu woman, to cure a child affected by the Evil Eye, waves salt and water round its face and strikes the ground with a broom three times; and among the Bani Isrâîls of Bombay, when the midwife drives off the blast of the Evil Eye, she holds in her left hand a shoe, a winnowing fan, and a broom.[2] In Italy, the broom is an old Latin charm against sorcery. The Beriyas, a gypsy tribe of the Ganges-Jumna Duâb, drive off the disease demon with a broom. In Oudh, it is said, when a broom-stick has been done with, it should always be laid down, and not left standing. Mahâ-Brâhmans, who gain by officiating at funeral ceremonies, are alleged to violate this rule in order to cause deaths.[3]

## THE RICE-POUNDER.

The rice-pounder, too, has magical powers. We have seen that it is one of the articles waved round the heads of the bride and bridegroom to scare evil spirits. In Bengal, it is worshipped when the child is first fed with grain. And there is a regular worship of it in the month of Baisâkh, or May. The top is smeared with red lead, anointed with oil, and offerings of rice and holy Dûrva grass made to it. The worship has even been provided with a Brâhmanical legend. A Guru once ordered his disciple to pronounce the word Dhenk at least one hundred and eight times a day. Nârada Muni was so pleased with his devotion, as he is the patron deity of the rice-pounder, that he paid him a visit riding on one, and carried off his votary to heaven.[4]

[1] "Folk-lore," i. 157; ii. 293.
[2] Campbell, "Notes," 53.
[3] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 202; Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 79.
[4] "Calcutta Review," xviii. 51.

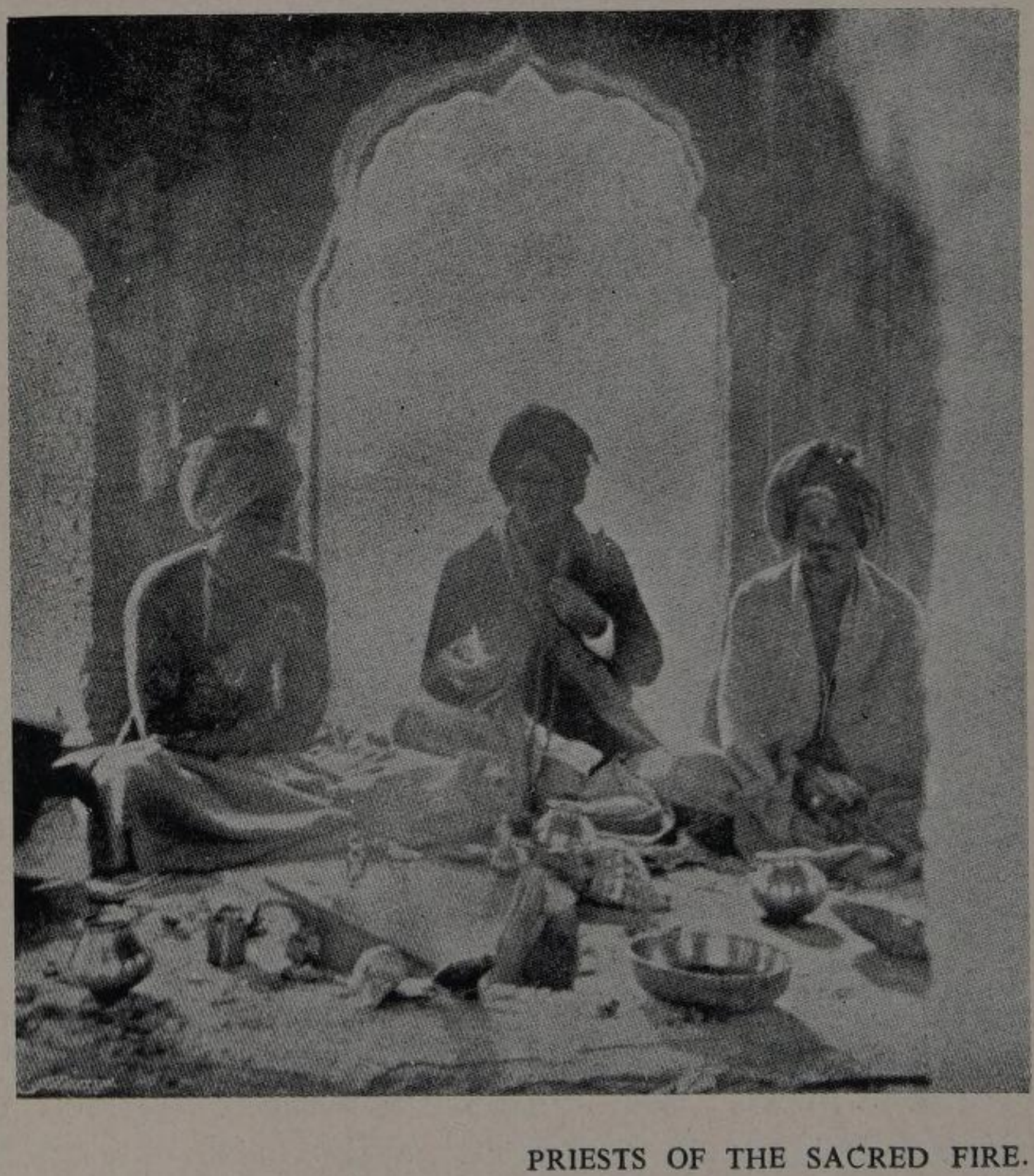
## THE PLOUGH.

Next comes the plough as a fetish. The carrying about of the plough and the prohibition common in Europe against moving it on Shrove Tuesday and other holidays have, like many other images of the same class, been connected with Phallicism.[1] But, considering the respect which an agricultural people would naturally pay to the chief implement used in husbandry, it is simpler to class it with the other tool fetishes of a similar kind. In India, as in Europe on Plough Monday,[2] there is a regular worship of the plough at the end of the sowing season, when the beam is coloured with turmeric, adorned with garlands, and brought home from the field in triumph. After that day it is considered unlucky to use it or lend it. The beam is put up in the village cattle track when rinderpest is about, as a charm to drive away the disease. Among some castes the polished share is fixed up in the marriage shed during the ceremony. Among the Orâons, the bride and bridegroom are made to stand on a curry stone, under which is placed a sheaf of corn resting on the plough yoke, and among the same people their god Darha is represented by a plough-share set upon an altar dedicated to him.[3] Here we have the mystic influence of grain and iron combined with the agricultural implement fetish.

## FIRE.

Fire is undoubtedly a very ancient Hindu protective fetish, and its virtue as a scarer of demons is very generally recognized. One of the earliest legends of the Hindu race is that recorded in the Rig Veda, where Agni, the god of fire, concealed himself in heaven, was brought down to earth by Mâtarisvan, and made over to the princely tribe of Bhrigu, in which we have the Oriental version of the myth of Prometheus. In the Vedas, Agni ranks next to the Rain god, and takes precedence of every other god in connection

[1] Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," ii. 119, note.
[2] Chambers, "Book of Days," i. 94 sq.
[3] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 252, 258.



PRIESTS OF THE SACRED FIRE.

with sacrificial rites. Even the Sun godling is regarded as a form of the heavenly fire. One of the titles of Agni is Pramantha, because on each occason when he was required he was summoned by the friction of the Aranî, or sacred fire-drill. This word Pramantha is probably the equivalent of the Prometheus of the Greeks.

## ORIGIN OF FIRE-WORSHIP.

According to Dr. Tylor, "the real and absolute worship of fire falls into two great divisions, the first belonging to fetishism, the second to polytheism proper, and the two apparently representing an earlier and later stage of theological ideas. The first is the rude, barbarous adoration of the actual flame which he watches writhing, devouring, roaring like a wild animal; the second belongs to an advanced generalization that any individual fire is a manifestation of one general elemental being, the fire god."[1] In a tropical country it would naturally be associated with the worship of the sun, and with that of the sainted dead as the medium by which the spirit wings its way to the other world. Among many races fire is provided for the ghost after interment, to enable it to warm itself and cook its food. As Mr. Spencer points out, the grave fire would tend to develop into kindred religious rites.[2]

## THE SACRED FIRE.

But it is almost certainly erroneous to class the sacred fire as an institution peculiar to the so-called Aryan races. The Homa is, of course, one of the most important elements of the modern Hindu ritual; but at the same time it prevails extensively as a means of propitiating the local or village godlings among many of the Drâvidian races, who are quite as likely to have discovered for themselves the mystical art of fire production by mechanical means, as to have

[1] "Primitive Culture," ii. 277.
[2] "Principles of Sociology," i. 158, 273.

adopted it by a process of conscious or unconscious imitation from the usages of their Hindu neighbours.

The production of fire by means of friction is a discovery which would naturally occur to jungle races, who must have constantly seen it occur by the ignition of the bamboo stalks rubbed together by the blasts of summer. From this would easily be developed the very primitive fire-drill or Asgara, used to this day by the Cheros, Korwas, Bhuiyas and other Drâvidian dwellers in the jungle. These people even to the present day habitually produce fire in this way. A small round cavity is made in a dry piece of bamboo, in which two men alternately with their open hands revolve a second pointed piece of the wood of the same tree. Smoke and finally fire are rapidly produced in this way, and the sparks are received on a dry leaf or other suitable tinder. The use of the flint and steel is also common, and was possibly an early and independent invention of the same people. Even to the present day in some of their more secret worship of the village godlings of disease, fire is produced for the fire sacrifice by this primitive meth d.

## THE FIRE-DRILL.

What has been called the Aryan fire-drill, the Aranî, which in one sense means "foreign" or "strange," and in another "moving" or "entering," "being inserted," is not apparently nowadays used in the ordinary ritual for the production of fire for the Homa or fire sacrifice. The rites connected with the sacred fire have been given in detail in another place.[1] In Northern India, at least, the production of the sacred fire has become the speciality of one branch of the Brâhmans, the Gujarâti, who are employed to conduct certain special services occasionally conducted at large cost by wealthy devotees, and known as Jag or Yaksha, in the sense of some particular religious rite.

The Aranî in its modern form consists of five pieces. The Adhararanî is the lower bed of the instrument, and is

[1] "Tribes and Castes of the N.-W.P. and Oudh," s.v. "Agnihotri."

usually made of the hard wood of the Khadira or Khair—Acacia catechu. In this are bored two shallow holes, one, the Garta, a small shallow round cavity, in which the plunger or revolving drill works and produces fire by friction. Close to this is a shallow oblong cavity, known as the Yonî or matrix, in which combustible tinder, generally the husk of the cocoanut, is placed, and in which the sparks and heated ashes are received and ignited. The upper or revolving portion of the drill is known as Uttararanî or Pramantha. This consists of two parts, the upper portion a piece of hard, round wood which one priest revolves with a rope or cord known as Netra. This part of the implement is known as Mantha or "the churner." It has a socket at the base in which the Sanku, a spike or dart, is fixed. This Sanku is made of a softer wood, generally that of the Pîpal, or sacred fig tree, than the Adhararanî or base; and each Aranî is provided with several spare pieces of fig wood for the purpose of replacing the Sanku, as it becomes gradually charred away by friction. The last piece is the Upamantha or upper churner, which is a flat board with a socket. This is pressed down by one priest, so as to force the Sanku deep and hard into the Garta or lower cavity, and to increase the resistance.

The working of the implement thus requires the labour of two priests, one of whom presses down the plunger, and the other who revolves the drill rapidly by means of the rope. It is not easy to obtain specimens of the implement, which is regarded as possessing mystical properties, and the production of the sacred fire is always conducted in secret.

We have in one of the African folk-tales a reference to the production of the fire by friction, in which the hyæna gets his ear burnt.[1] In one of the tales of Somadeva we read, "Then the Brâhman blessed the king and said to him, 'I am a Brâhman named Nâga Sarman, and bear the fruit, I hope, from my sacrifice. When the god of fire is pleased with this Vilva sacrifice, then Vilva fruits of gold will come out of the fire cavity. Then the god of fire will appear in

[1] Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 547.

bodily form, and grant me a boon, and so I have spent much time in offering Vilva fruits.' Then the seven-rayed god appeared from the sacrificial cavity, bringing the king a golden Vilva fruit of his tree of valour." [1]

The Agnikunda, the hole or enclosed space for the sacred fire, out of which, according to the popular legend, various Râjput tribes were produced, is thus probably derived from the Garta or pit out of which the sparks fly in the fire-drill.

The Agnihotri Brâhman has to take particular care to preserve the germ of the sacred fire, as did the Roman vestal virgins. It is in charge of the special guardians at some shrines, such as those of Sambhunâth and Kharg Joginî at Nepâl.[2]

### THE MUHAMMADAN SACRED FIRE.

But it is not only in the Hindu ritual that the sacred fire holds a prominent place. Thus, in ancient Ireland, the sacred fire was obtained by the friction of wood and the striking of stones, and it was supposed "that the spirits of fire dwelt in these objects, and when the priests invoked them to appear, they brought good luck to the household for the coming year, but if invoked by other hands on that special day, their influence was malific." [3]

So, among the Muhammadans in the time of Akbar, "at noon of the day when the sun enters the 19th degree of Aries, the whole world being surrounded by the light, they expose a round piece of a white shining stone, called in Hindi Sûrajkrant.[4] A piece of cotton is then held near it, which catches fire from the heat of the stone. The celestial fire is committed to the care of proper persons." [5] Perhaps

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 322.

[2] Oldfield, "Sketches," ii. 242; Wright, "History," 35; and compare Prescott, "Peru," i. chap. 3; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 312.

[3] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 126.

[4] Abul Fazl appears to have confused Suraj Sankrânti or the entrance of the sun into a constellation with Sûrya-Kânta or "sun-beloved," the sun-crystal or lens, which gives out heat when exposed to the rays of the sun.

[5] Blochmann, "Aîn-i-Akbari," i. 48.

the best example of the Muhammadan sacred fire is that at the Imâmbâra at Gorakhpur. There it was first started by a renowned Shiah Faqîr, named Roshan 'Ali, and has been maintained unquenched for more than a hundred years, a special body of attendants and supplies of wood being provided for it. There seems little reason to believe that the fire is a regular Muhammadan institution; it has probably arisen from an imitation of the customs of the Hindu Jogis.

It is respected both by Hindus and Musalmâns, and as in the case of the fires of the same kind, maintained by many noted Jogis, its ashes have a reputation as a cure for fever. We shall meet with the same belief of the curative effects of the ashes of the sacred fire in the case of the Holî. The ashes of the Jogi's fire form a part of many popular charms. In Italy, the holy log burnt on Christmas Eve, which corresponds to the Yule log of the North of Europe, is taken with due observances to the Faunus, or other spirits of the forest.[1] In Ireland part of the ashes from the bonfire on the 24th of June is thrown into sown fields to make their produce abundant.[2] The ceremony of strewing ashes on the penitent on Ash Wednesday dates from Saxon times.[3] A modern Muhammadan of the advanced school has endeavoured to rationalize the curative effect of the ashes of the Gorakhpur fire by the suggestion that it is the potash in it which works the cure, but probably the element of faith has much to do with it.[4]

### VOLCANIC FIRE; WILL-O'-THE-WISP.

Fire of a volcanic nature is, as might be expected, regarded with veneration. Such is the fire which in some places in Kashmîr rises out of the ground.[5]

The meteoric light or Shahâba is also much respected. In Hoshangâbâd there is a local godling, known as Khapra

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 103.
[2] "Folk-lore," iv. 359.
[3] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 92.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 199.
[5] Hugel, "Travels," quoted by Jarrett, "Aîn-i-Akbari," ii. 314.

Bâba, who lives on the edge of a tank, and is said to appear in the darkness with a procession of lights.[1] In Rohilkhand and the western districts of Oudh, one often hears of the Shahâba. In burial-grounds, especially where the bodies of those slain in battle are interred, it is said that phantom armies appear in the night. Tents are pitched, the horses are tethered, and lovely girls dance before the heroes and the Jinn who are in their train. Sometimes some foolish mortal is attracted by the spectacle, and he suffers for his fool-hardiness by loss of life or reason. Sometimes these ignes fatui mislead the traveller at night, as Robin Goodfellow "misleads night wanderers, laughing at their harm," or the Cornish piskies, who show a light and entice people into bogs.[2] There appears to be in Northern India no trace of the idea which so widely appears in Europe, that such lights are the souls of unbaptized children.[3]

## THE TOMB FETISH.

Next comes the respect paid to the cairn which covers the remains of the dead or is a mere cenotaph commemorating a death. We have already seen instances of this in the pile of stones which marks the place where a tiger has killed a man, and in the cairns in honour of the jungle deities, or the spirits which infest dangerous passes. The rationale of these sepulchral cairns is to keep down the ghost of the dead man and prevent it from injuring the living. We see the same idea in the rule of the old ritual, that on the departure of the last mourner, after the conclusion of the funeral ceremony, the Adhvâryu, or officiating priest, should place a circle of stones behind him, to prevent death overtaking those who have gone in advance.[4]

The primitive grave-heap grows into the cairn, and the

[1] "Settlement Report," 121.
[2] "North India Notes and Queries," ii. 117; Hunt, "Popular Romances," 81; Campbell, "Popular Tales," ii. 82.
[3] Conway, "Demonology," i. 225.
[4] Rajendra Lâla Mitra, "Indo-Aryans," i. 146.

THE FOOTPRINTS OF VISHNU.

cairn into the tomb or Stûpa.[1] In the way of a tomb Hindus will worship almost anything. The tomb of an English lady is worshipped at Bhandâra in the Central Provinces. At Murmari, in the Nâgpur District, a similar tomb is smeared with turmeric and lime, and people offer cocoanuts to it in the hope of getting increased produce from their fields. The tomb of an English officer near the Fort of Bijaygarh in the Aligarh District was, when I visited the place some years ago, revered as the shrine of the local village godling. There is a similar case at Râwalpindi. There is a current tale of some people offering brandy and cigars to the tomb of a European planter who was addicted to these luxuries in his lifetime, but no one can tell where the tomb actually exists.[2]

## MISCELLANEOUS FETISHES.

We have already referred to the Sâlagrâma fetish. Akin to this is the Vishnupada, the supposed footmark of Vishnu, which is very like the footmark of Hercules, of which Herodotus speaks.[3]

There is a celebrated Vishnupada temple at Gaya, where the footprint of Vishnu is in a large silver basin under a canopy, inside an octagonal shrine. Pindas or holy balls and various kinds of offerings are placed by the pilgrims inside the basin and around the footprint. It was probably derived from the footmark of Buddha, which is a favourite subject in the early Buddhistic sculptures. Dr. Tylor, curiously enough, thinks that it may have some connection with the footmarks of extinct birds or animals imprinted on the strata of alluvial rocks.[5]

[1] Ferguson, "Tree and Serpent Worship," 88; "History of Indian Architecture," 60; Cunningham, "Bhilsa Topes," 9; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 254 sq.

[2] "Central Provinces Gazetteer," 63; Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 8; "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 93.

[3] iv. 82.

[4] Monier-Williams, "Hinduism and Brâhmanism," 309.

[5] Tennent, "Ceylon, ii. 132; Ferguson, "Indian Architecture 184, with engraving; Tylor, "Early History," 116.

Even among Muhammadans we have the same idea, and the Qadam-i-Rasûl, or mosque of the footprint of the Prophet at Lucknow, used to contain a stone marked with his footmarks, which was said to have been brought by some pilgrim from Arabia. It disappeared during the Mutiny.[1] There is another in a mosque at Chunâr and at many other places.

The same respect is païd to the footprint of Râmanand in his monastery at Benares, and the pin of Brahma's slipper is now fixed up in the steps of the bathing-place at Bithûr, known as the residence of the infamous Nâna Sâhib, where it is worshipped at an annual feast.

[1] "Oudh Gazetteer," ii. 370.

# CHAPTER IV.

## ANIMAL-WORSHIP.

Τῶ δέ καὶ Αὐτομέδων ὕπαγε ζυγὸν ὠκέας ἵππους
Χάνθον καὶ Βαλίον, τὼ ἅμα πνοιῆσι πετέσθην
Τούς ἔτεκε Ζεφύρω ἀνέμω Ἅρπυια Ποδάργη
Βοσκομένη λειμῶνι παρὰ ῥόον Ὠκεανοῖο.

*Iliad*, xvi. 148-51.

## Origin of Animal-worship.

We now come to consider the special worship of certain animals. The origin of this form of belief may possibly be traced to many different sources.

In the first place, no savage fixes the boundary line between man and the lower forms of animal life so definitely as more civilized races are wont to do. The animal, in their belief, has very much the same soul, much the same feelings and passion as men have, a theory exemplified in the way the Indian ploughman speaks to his ox, or the shepherd calls his flock.

To him, again, the belief is familiar that the spirits of his ancestors appear in the form of animals, as among the Drâvidian races they come in the shape of a tiger which attacks the surviving relatives, or as a chicken which leaves the mark of its footsteps in the ashes when it re-visits its former home.

So, all these people believe that the witch soul wanders about at night, and for want of a better shape enters into some animal, takes the form of a tiger or a bear, or flies through the air like a bird.

All through folk-lore we find the idea that man has kinship

with animals generally accepted. We constantly find the girl wooed by the frog, marrying the pigeon, elephant, eagle, or whale. Every child in the nursery reads of the frog Prince, and no savage sees any particular incongruity in his marriage and transformation. In more than one of the Indian tales the childless wife longs for a child and is delivered of a snake.

The incident of animal metamorphosis is also familiar. Thus, in one of Somadeva's tales his mistress turns a man into an ox; in another his wife transforms him into a buffalo; in a third the angry hermit turns the king into an elephant.[1] Everyone remembers the terrific scene of transformation into various animals which makes up the tale of the second Qalandar in the Arabian Nights. Animals, too, constantly assume other shapes. In one of the Bengal stories the mouse becomes a cat. In other Indian tales the golden deer becomes the mannikin demon, the white hind becomes the white witch, the hero's mother becomes a black bitch, the hero himself a parrot, and so on.[2] In fact a large part of the incidents of Indian stories turns on various forms of metamorphosis, and every English child knows how the lover of Earl Mar's daughter took the shape of a dove.

We have again the very common incident in the folk-tales of animals understanding the speech of human beings, and men learning the tongue of birds, and the like. Solomon, according to the Qurân, knew the language of animals; in the tales of Somadeva, the Vaisya Bhâshâjna knows the language of all beasts and birds, a faculty which in Germany is gained by eating a white snake.[3]

Then there is the large cycle of tales in which the grateful animal warns the hero or heroine of approaching danger, as in the story of Bopuluchi, or brings news, or produces gold.

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 342; ii. 135, 230, 302, 363; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 13; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 448.

[2] Lâl Bihâri Dê, "Folk-tales," 139.

[3] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 499; ii. 276; Grimm, "Household Tales," No 33; i. 357; Knowles, "Folk-tales of Kashmîr," 432; Campbell, "Santâ. Folk-tales," 22; Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 496; Campbell, "Popular Tales," i. 283.

The idea of grateful animals assisting their benefactors runs through the whole range of folk-lore.[1]

Another series of cognate ideas has been very carefully analyzed by Mr. Campbell. The spirits of the dead haunt two places, the house and the tomb. Those who haunt the house are friendly; those who haunt the tomb are unfriendly. Two classes of animals correspond to these two classes of spirits—an at-home, fearless class, as the snake, the rat, flies and ants and bees, into which the home-haunting or friendly spirits would go; and a wild, unsociable class, such as bats and owls, dogs, jackals, or vultures, into which the unfriendly or tomb-haunting spirits would go. In the case of some of these tomb-haunting animals, the dog, jackal, and vulture, the feeling towards them as tomb-haunters seems to have given place to the belief that as the spirit lives in the tomb where the body is laid, so, if the body be eaten by an animal, the spirit lives in the animal, as in a living tomb.[2]

Other animals, again, are invested with particular qualities, fierceness and courage, strength or agility, and eating part of their flesh, or wearing a portion as an amulet, conveys to the possessor the qualities of the animal. A familiar instance of this is the belief in the claws and flesh of the tiger as amulets or charms against disease and the influence of evil spirits.

Many animals, too, are respected for their use to man or as scarers of demons, as the cow; as possessors of wisdom, like the elephant or snake; as semi-human in origin or character, as the ape. But it is, perhaps, dangerous to attempt, as Mr. Campbell has done, to push the classification much farther, because the respect paid to any particular animal is possibly based on varied and diverging lines of belief.

Lastly, as Mr. Frazer has shown, many animals are re-

[1] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 74, 412; Lâl Bihâri Dê, *loc. cit.*, 40, 106, 134, 138, 155, 210, 223; "Cinderella," 526; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 13; Clouston, *loc. cit.*, i. 223.

[2] Campbell, "Notes," 259.

garded as representing the Corn spirit, and are either revered or killed in their divine forms to promote the return of vegetation with each recurring spring.

## HORSE-WORSHIP.

To illustrate some of these principles from the worship of certain special animals, we may begin with the horse.

War horses were so highly prized by the early Aryans in their battles with the aborigines, that the horse, under the name of Dadhikra, "he that scatters the hoar frost like milk," soon became an object of worship, and in the Veda we have a spirited account of the worship paid to this godlike being.[1]

Another horse often spoken of in the early legends is Syâma Karna, "he with the black ears," which alone was considered a suitable victim in the horse sacrifice or Asvamedha. One hundred horse sacrifices entitled the sacrificer to displace Indra from heaven, so the deity was always trying to capture the horse which was allowed to roam about before immolation. The saint Gâlava, who was a pupil of Visvamitra, when he had completed his studies, asked his tutor what fee he should pay. The saint told him that he charged no fee, but he insisted in asking, till at last the angry Rishi said that he would be content with nothing less than a thousand black-eared horses. After long search Gâlava found three childless Râjas, who had each two hundred such horses, and they consented to exchange them for sons. Gâlava then went to Yayâti, whose daughter could bear a son for any one and still remain a virgin. By her means the three Râjas became fathers of sons, Visvamitra took them, and to make up the number, had himself two sons by the same mystic bride.

In the Mahâbhârata, Uchchaihsravas, "he with the long ears," or "he that neighs loudly," is the king of the horses, and belongs to Indra. He is swift as thought, follows the

[1] "Rig Veda," iv. 33; Datt, "History of Civilization," i. 72 sq., 79; Monier-Williams, "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 329.

path of the sun, and is luminous and white, with a black tail, made so by the magic of the serpents, who have covered it with black hair. In the folk-tales he consorts with mares of mortal birth, and begets steeds of unrivalled speed, like the divine Homeric coursers of Æneas.[1] In the tales of Somadeva we find the king addressing his faithful horse, and praying for his aid in danger, as Achilles speaks to his steeds Xanthos and Balios, and in the Karling legend of Bayard.[2] We meet also with the horse of Manidatta, which was "white as the moon; the sound of its neighing was as musical as that of a clear conch or other sweet-sounding instrument; it looked like the waves of the sea of milk surging on high; it was marked with curls on the neck, and adorned with the crest jewels, the bracelet, and other signs, which it seemed it had acquired by being born in the race of Gandharvas."

At a later mythological stage we meet Kalki, the white horse which is to be the last Avatâra of Vishnu, and reminds us of the white horse of the Book of Revelation. We meet in the Rig Veda with Yatudhanas, the demon horse, which feeds now upon human flesh (like the Bucephalus of the legend of Alexander), now upon horseflesh, and now upon milk from cows. He has a host of brethren, such as Arvan, half horse, half bird, on which the Daityas are supposed to ride. Dadhyanch or Dadhîcha has a curious legend. He was a Rishiand. Indra, after teaching him the sciences, threatened to cut his head off if he communicated the knowledge to any one else. But the Aswins tempted him to disobey the god, and then, to save him from the wrath of Indra, cut off his head and replaced it with that of a horse. Finally Indra found his horse-head in the lake at Kurukshetra, and using it as Sampson did the jaw-bone of the ass, he slew the Asuras. We have, again, Vishnu in the form of Hayagrîva, or "horse-necked," which he assumed to save

[1] Wright, "History," 165; "Iliad," v. 265 sqq.; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 593.

[2] Tawney, *ibid.*, i. 130, 574, quoting Grimm, "Teutonic Mythology," i. 392.

the Veda, carried off by two Asuras, and in another shape he is Hayasiras or Hayasîrsha, which vomits forth fire and drinks up the waters. In the Purânas we meet the Daitya Kesi, who assumes the form of a horse and attacks Krishna, but the hero thrusts his hand into his mouth and rends him asunder. A large chapter of Scottish folk-lore depends on the doings of magic horses such as these.[1]

The flying horse of the Arabian Nights has been transferred into many of the current folk-tales, and has found its way into European folk-lore.[2] In the same connection we meet the magic bridle; the flying car, such as Pushpaka, the flying vehicle of Kuvera, the god of wealth; the flying bed, the Urân Khatola of the Indian tales; the flying boat, and the flying shoes.[3]

There are numerous other horses famous in Hindu legend. The saint Alam Sayyid of Baroda was known as Ghorê Kâ Pîr, or the horse saint. His horse was buried near him, and Hindus hang images of the animal on trees round his tomb.[4] We have already spoken of Gûga and his mare Javâdiyâ. The horse of the king of Bhilsa or Bhadrâvatî was of dazzling brightness, and regarded as the palladium of the kingdom, but in spite of all the care bestowed upon it, it was carried off by the Pândavas.

There is a stock horse miracle story told in connection with Lâl Beg, the patron saint of the sweepers. The king of Delhi lost a valuable horse, and the sweepers were ordered to bury it, but as the animal was very fat, they proceeded to cut it up for themselves, giving one leg to the king's priest. They took the meat home and proceeded to cook it, but being short of salt, they sent an old woman to buy some. She went to the salt merchant's shop and pressed him to serve her at once, "If you do not hurry," said she, "a thousand rupees' worth of meat will be ruined." He informed the king, who, suspecting the state of the case, ordered the

[1] Campbell, "Popular Tales," Introduction, lxxviii.
[2] Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 476; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 373.
[3] Clouston, *loc. cit.*, i. 417; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 479; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 261; Clouston, *ibid.*, i. 110, 218; Tawney, *ibid.*, i. 13.
[4] Rousselet, "India and its Native Princes," 116.

sweepers to produce the horse. They were in dismay at the order, but they laid what was left of the animal on a mound sacred to Lâl Beg, and prayed to him to save them, whereupon the horse stood up, but only on three legs. So they went to the king and confessed how they had disposed of the fourth leg. The unlucky priest was executed, and the horse soon after died also.[1]

The horse is regarded as a lucky and exceedingly pure animal. When a cooking vessel has become in any way defiled, a common way of purifying it is to make a horse smell it. In the Dakkhin it is said that evil spirits will not approach a horse for fear of his foam.[2] In Northern India, the entry of a man on horseback into a sugar-cane field during sowing time is regarded as auspicious. This taking of omens from horses was well known in Germany, and Tacitus says, "*Proprium gentis equorum praesagia ac monitus experiri, hinnitus ac fremitus observant.*"[3] There does not appear to be in India any trace of the idea prevalent in England that the horse has the power of seeing ghosts, or that it can cure diseases such as whooping cough.[4] But, like the bull, the stallion is believed to scare the demon of barrenness. In the Râmâyana, Kausalyâ touches the stallion in the hope of obtaining sons, and with the same object the king and queen smell the odour of the burnt marrow or fat of the horse. The water in which a fish is washed has the same effect on women in Western folk-lore. With the same object, at the Asvamedha, the queen lies at night beside the slain sacrificial horse.[5]

It is popularly supposed that the horse originally had wings, and that the chestnuts or scars on the legs are the places where the wings originally grew. Eating horseflesh is supposed to bring on cramp, and when a Sepoy at rifle practice misses the target, his comrades taunt him with having eaten the unlucky meat.[6]

[1] "Indian Antiquary," xi. 325 sq.; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 2.
[2] Campbell, "Notes," 392.
[3] "Germania," 10.
[4] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 142.
[5] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," i. 332.
[6] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 113.

## MODERN HORSE-WORSHIP.

Of modern horse-worship there are many examples. The Palliwâl Brâhmans of Jaysalmer worship the bridle of a horse, which Colonel Tod supposes to prove the Scythic origin of the early colonists, who were equestrian as well as nomadic.[1] Horse-worship is still mixed up with the creed of the Buddhists of Yunân, who doubtless derived it from India.[2]

In Western India this form of worship is common. It is the chief object of reverence at the Dasahra festival. Some Râjput Bhîls worship a deity called Ghorâdeva or a stone horse; the Bhâtiyas worship a clay horse at the Dasahra, and the Ojha Kumhârs erect a clay horse on the sixth day after birth, and make the child worship it. Rag horses are offered at the tombs of saints at Gujarât. The Kunbis wash their horses on the day of the Dasahra, decorate them with flowers, sacrifice a sheep to them, and sprinkle the blood on them.[3] The custom among the Drâvidian races of offering clay horses to the local gods has been already noticed. The Gonds have a horse godling in Kodapen, and at the opening of the rainy season they worship a stone in his honour outside the village. A Gond priest offers a pottery image of the animal and a heifer, saying, "Thou art our guardian! Protect our oxen and cows! Let us live in safety!"[4] The heifer is then sacrificed and the meat eaten by the worshippers. The Devak or marriage guardian of some of the Dakkhin tribes is a horse.

## THE WORSHIP OF THE ASS.

The contempt for the ass seems to have arisen in post-Vedic times. Indra had a swift-footed ass, and one of the epithets of Vikramaditya was Gadharbha-rûpa, or "he in the form of an ass." The Vishnu Purâna tells of the demon Dhenuka, who took the form of an ass and began to kick Balarâma and Krishna, as they were plucking fruit in the demon's grove. Balarâma seized him, with sundry of his

[1] "Annals," ii. 319.
[2] Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 275.
[3] Campbell, "Notes," 292.
[4] Hislop, "Papers," Appendix, i. iii.

companions and flung him on the top of a palm tree. Khara, a cannibal Râkshasa who was killed by Râma Chandra, also used to take the form of an ass. Muhammad said, "The most ungrateful of all voices is surely the voice of asses." Muhammadans believe that the last animal which entered the ark was the ass to which Iblîs was clinging. At the threshold the beast seemed troubled and could enter no farther, when Noah said unto him, "Fie upon thee! Come in!" But as the ass was still in trouble and did not advance, Noah cried, "Come in, though the Devil be with thee!" So the ass entered, and with him Iblîs. Thereupon Noah asked, "O enemy of Allah! Who brought thee into the ark?" And Iblîs answered, "Thou art the man, for thou saidest to the ass, 'Come in, though the Devil be with thee!'"[1]

The worship of the ass is chiefly associated with that of Sîtalâ, whose vehicle he is. The Agarwâla sub-caste of Banyas have a curious rule of making the bridegroom just before marriage mount an ass. This is done in secret, and though said to be intended to propitiate the goddess of small-pox, is possibly a survival of some primitive form of worship.

In folk-lore the ass constantly appears. We have in Somadeva the fable of the ass in the panther's skin, which also appears in the fifth book of the Panchatantra. Professor Weber asserts that it was derived from the original in Æsop, but this is improbable, as it is also found in the Buddhist Jâtakas. In one of the Kashmîr tales we have the bird saying, "If any person will peel off the bark of my tree, pound it, mix the powder with some of the juice of its leaves and then work it into a ball, it will be found to work like a charm; for any one who smells it will be turned into an ass."[2] We have instances of ass transformation in Apuleius and Lucian, and in German and other Western folk-tales.

[1] Burton, "Arabian Nights," ii. 340.

[2] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 90; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 168; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 97; Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 419.

## THE LION.

The lion, from his comparative rarity in Northern India, appears little in popular belief. It is one of the vehicles of Pârvatî, and rude images of the animal are sometimes placed near shrines dedicated to Devî. There is a current idea that only one pair of lions exists in the world at the same time. They have two cubs, a male and a female, which, when they arrive at maturity, devour their parents. In the folk-tales the childless king is instructed that he will find in the forest a boy riding on a lion, and this will be his son. The lovely maiden in the legend of Jimutavâhana is met riding on a lion. We have the lion Pingalika, king of beasts, with the jackal as his minister, and in one of the cycle of tales in which the weak animal overcomes the more powerful, the hare by his wisdom causes the lion to drown himself. The basis of the famous tale of Androcles is probably Buddhistic, but only a faint reference to it is found in Somadeva. In one of the modern stories the soldier takes a thorn out of the tiger's foot, and is rewarded with a box which contains a manikin, who procures for him all he desires [1]

## THE TIGER.

The tiger naturally takes the place of the lion. According to the comparative mythologists, "the tiger, panther, and leopard possess several of the mystical characteristics of the lion as the hidden sun. Thus, Dionysos and Siva, the phallical god *par excellence*, have these animals as their emblems." [2] Siva, it is true, is represented as sitting in his ascetic form on a tiger skin, but it is his consort, Durgâ, who uses the animal as her vehicle. Quite apart from the solar myth theory, the belief that witches are changed into tigers, and the terror inspired by him, are quite sufficient to account for the honour bestowed upon him.

[1] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 37, 78; ii. 28, 32; Grimm, *loc. cit.*, ii. 404; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 107.

[2] Gubernatis, *loc. cit* ii. 160.

Much also of the worship of the tiger is probably of totemistic origin. Thus the Baghel Râjputs claim descent, and from him (*bâgh*, *vyâghra*, "the spotted one") derive their name. This tribe will not, in Central India, destroy the animal. So, "no consideration will induce a Sumatran to catch or wound a tiger, except in self-defence, or immediately after the tiger has destroyed a friend or a relation. When a European has set traps for tigers, the people of the neighbourhood have been known to go by night to the spot and explain to the tiger that the traps were not set by them, nor with their consent." The Bhîls and the Bajrâwat Râjputs of Râjputâna also claim tiger origin.[1]

Another idea appearing in tiger-worship is that he eats human flesh, and thus obtains possession of the souls of the victims whom he devours. For this reason a man-eating tiger is supposed to walk along with his head bent, because the ghosts of his victims sit on it and weigh it down.[2]

He is, again, often the disguise of a sorcerer of evil temper, an idea similar to that which was the basis of the European dread of lycanthropy and the were-wolf. "Accounts differ as to the way in which the were-wolf was chosen. According to one account, a human victim was sacrificed, one of his bowels was mixed with the bowels of animal victims, the whole was consumed by the worshippers, and the man who unwittingly ate the human bowel was changed into a wolf. According to another account, lots were cast among the members of a particular family, and he upon whom the lot fell was the were-wolf. Being led to the brink of a tarn, he stripped himself, hung his clothes on an oak tree, plunged into the tarn, and swimming across it, went into desert places. There he was changed into a wolf, and herded with wolves for nine years. If he tasted human blood before the nine years were out he had to remain a wolf for ever. If during the nine years he

[1] Forsyth, "Highlands of Central Indian," 278; Tod, "Annals," ii. 660; Rowney, "Wild Tribes," 139; Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 214; Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 110.

[2] Trumbull, "Blood Covenant," 312; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 309; Sleeman, "Rambles," i. 153 sqq.

abstained from preying on men, then, when the tenth year came round, he recovered his human shape. Similarly, there is a negro family at the mouth of the Congo who are supposed to possess the power of turning themselves into leopards in the gloomy depths of the forest. As leopards, they knock people down, but do no further harm, for they think that if, as leopards, they once lapped blood, they would be leopards for ever."[1]

Hence in India the jungle people who are in the way of meeting him will not pronounce his name, but speak of him as Gîdar, "the jackal," Jânwar, "the beast," or use some other euphemistic term. They do the same in many cases with the wolf and bear, and though they sometimes hesitate to kill the animal themselves, they will readily assist sportsmen to destroy him, and make great rejoicings when he is killed. A Shikâri will break off a branch on the road as he goes along, and say, "As thy life has departed, so may the tiger die!" When he is killed they will bring forward some spirits and pour it on the head of the animal, addressing him, "Mahârâja! During your life you confined yourself to cattle, and never injured your human subjects. Now that you are dead, spare us and bless us!" In Akola the gardeners are unwilling to inform the sportsmen of the whereabouts of a tiger or panther which may have taken up its quarters in their plantation, for they have a superstition that a garden plot loses its fertility from the moment one of these animals is killed there. So, with the Ainos of Japan, who when a bear is trapped or wounded by an arrow, go through an apologetic or propitiatory ceremony.[2]

In Nepâl they have a regular festival in honour of the tiger known as the Bâgh Jâtra, in which the worshippers used to dance in the disguise of tigers.

[1] "Folk-lore," i. 169; Lyall, "Asiatic Studies," 13; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 323; Conway, "Demonology," i. 313 sq.; Scott, "Letters on Demonology," 174.

[2] "Berâr Gazetteer," 62; Wright, "History of Nepâl," 38; Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 101.

## TIGER-WORSHIP AMONG THE JUNGLE RACES.

But, as is natural, the worship of the tiger prevails more widely among the jungle races. We have already met with Bâgheswar, the tiger deity of the Mirzapur forest tribes. The Santâls also worship him, and the Kisâns honour him as Banrâja, or "lord of the jungle." They will not kill him, and believe that in return for their devotion he will spare them. Another branch of the tribe does not worship him, but all swear by him. The Bhuiyârs, on the contrary, have no veneration for him, and think it their interest to slay him whenever they have an opportunity. The Juângs take their oaths on earth from an ant-hill, and on a tiger's skin; the ant-hill is a sacred object with the Khariyas, and the tiger skin is brought in when the Hos and Santâls are sworn. Among the eastern Santâls, the tiger is worshipped, but in Râmgarh only those who have suffered from the animal's ferocity condescend to adore him. If a man is carried off by a tiger, the Bâgh Bhût, or "Tiger ghost," is worshipped, and an oath on a tiger's skin is considered most solemn.[1]

## BÂGH DEO, THE TIGER GODLING.

Further west the Kurkus of Hoshangâbâd worship the tiger godling, Bâgh Deo, who is the Wâgh Deo of Berâr. At Petri in Berâr is a sort of altar to Wâghâî Devî, the tiger goddess, founded on a spot where a Gond woman was once seized by a tiger. She is said to have vanished as if by some supernatural agency, and the Gonds who desire protection from wild beasts present to her altar gifts of every kind of animal from a cow downwards. A Gond presides over the shrine and receives the votive offerings.

In Hoshangâbâd the Bhomka is the priest of Bâgh Deo. "On him devolves the dangerous duty of keeping tigers out of the boundaries. When a tiger visits a village, the Bhomka repairs to Bâgh Deo, and makes his offerings to the god, and promises to repeat them for so many years on condition

[1] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 132, 133, 158, 214.

that the tiger does not appear for that time. The tiger, on his part, never fails to fulfil the compact thus solemnly made by his lord; for he is pre-eminently an upright and honourable beast—'pious withal,' as Mandeville says, not faithless or treacherous like the leopard, whom no compact can bind. Some Bhomkas, however, masters of more powerful spell, are not obliged to rely on the traditional honour of the tiger, but compel his attendance before Bâgh Deo; and such a Bhomka has been seen, a very Daniel among tigers, muttering his incantations over two or three at a time as they crouched before him. Still more mysterious was the power of Kâlibhît Bhomka (now, alas! no more). He died, the victim of misplaced confidence in a Louis Napoleon of tigers, the basest and most bloodthirsty of his race. He had a fine large Sâj tree into which, when he uttered his spells, he would drive a nail. On this the tiger came and ratified the contract with enormous paw manual. Such was that of Timûr the Lame, when he dipped his mighty hand in blood and stamped its impression on a parchment grant."[1]

In the same way in other parts of the Central Provinces the village sorcerers profess to be able to call tigers from the jungles, to seize them by the ears, and control their voracity by whispering to them a command not to come near their villages, or they pretend to know a particular kind of root, by burying which they can prevent the beasts of the forest from devouring men or cattle. With the same object they lay on the pathway small models of bedsteads and other things which are supposed to act as charms and stop their advance.

## MAGICAL POWERS OF DEAD TIGERS.

All sorts of magical powers are ascribed to the tiger after death. The fangs, the claws, the whiskers are potent charms, valuable for love philters and prophylactics against demoniacal influence, the Evil Eye, disease and death. The

[1] "Berâr Gazetteer," I. [illegible]; "Hoshangâbâd Settlement Report," 255 sq.

milk of a tigress is valuable medicine, and it is one of the stock impossible tasks or tests imposed upon the hero to find and fetch it, as he is sent to get the feathers of the eagle, water from the well of death, or the mystical cow guarded by Dânos or Râkshasas.[1] The fat is considered a valuable remedy for rheumatism and similar maladies. The heart and flesh are tonics, stimulants and aphrodisiacs, and give strength and courage to those who use them. The Miris of Assam prize tiger's flesh as food for men; it gives them strength and courage; but it is not suited for women, as it would make them too strong-minded.[2] The whiskers are believed, among other qualities which they possess, to be a slow poison when taken with food, and the curious rudimentary clavicles, known as Santokh or "happiness," are highly valued as amulets. There is a general belief that a tiger gets a new lobe to his liver every year. A favourite amulet to repel demoniacal influence consists of the whiskers of the tiger or leopard mixed with nail parings, some sacred root or grass, and red lead, and hung on the throat or upper arm. This treatment is particularly valuable in the case of young children immediately after birth. Tiger's flesh is also a potent medicine and charm, and it is burnt in the cow-stall when cattle disease prevails. The flesh of the tiger, or if that be not procurable, the flesh of the jackal is burnt in the fields to keep off blight from the crops.

### TIGERS, PROPITIATION OF.

Some tigers are supposed to be amenable to courtesy. In one of the Kashmîr tales, the hero in search of tiger's milk shoots an arrow and pierces one of the teats of the tigress, to whom he explains that he hoped she would thus be able to suckle her cubs with less trouble. In other tales we find the tiger pacified if he is addressed as "Uncle."[3] So, Colonel Tod describes how a tiger attacked a boy near his camp, and was supposed to have, like the fierce Râkshasa of the Nepâl

[1] See for example Knowles, "Kashmîr Folk-tales," 3, 45, 46.
[2] Dalton, *loc. cit.*, 33.
[3] Knowles, *loc. cit.*, 47; Campbell, "Santâl Tales," 18.

legend, released the child when he was addressed as "Uncle."[1] "This Lord of the Black Rock, for such is the designation of the tiger, is one of the most ancient bourgeois of Morwan; his stronghold is Kâla Pahâr, between this and Magawâr; and his reign during a long series of years has been unmolested, notwithstanding numerous acts of aggression on his bovine subjects. Indeed, only two nights before he was disturbed gorging on a buffalo belonging to a poor oilman of Morwan. Whether the tiger was an incarnation of one of the Mori lords of Morwan, tradition does not say; but neither gun, bow, nor spear has ever been raised against him. In return for this forbearance, it is said, he never preyed on man; or if he seized one, would, on being entreated with the endearing epithet of 'Uncle,' let go his hold."[2]

## TIGER-WORSHIP AMONG THE GONDS.

Among the Gonds tiger-worship assumes a particularly disgusting form. At marriages among them, a terrible apparition appears of two demoniacs possessed by Bâgheswar, the tiger god. They fall ravenously on a bleating kid, and gnaw it with their teeth till it expires. "The manner," says Captain Samuells, who witnessed the performance, "in which the two men seized the kid with their teeth and killed it was a sight which could only be equalled on a feeding day in the Zoological Gardens or a menagerie."[3]

## MEN METAMORPHOSED INTO TIGERS.

The only visible difference between the ordinary animal and a man metamorphosed into a tiger was explained to Colonel Sleeman to consist in the fact that the latter had no tail. In the jungles about Deori there is said to be a root, which if a man eats, he is converted into a tiger on the spot; and if, when in this state, he eats another species of root, he is turned back into a man again.

[1] Wright "History," 169. [2] "Annals," ii. 669.
[3] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 280.

"A melancholy instance of this," said Colonel Sleeman's informant, "occurred in my own father's family when I was an infant. His washerman Raghu was, like all washermen, a great drunkard. Being seized with a violent desire to ascertain what a man felt like in the state of a tiger, he went one day to the jungle and brought back two of these roots, and desired his wife to stand by with one of them, and the instant she saw him assume the tiger's shape to thrust the root she held into his mouth. She consented, and the washerman ate his root and instantly became a tiger, whereupon she was so terrified that she ran off with the antidote in her hand. Poor old Raghu took to the woods, and there ate a good many of his friends from the neighbouring villages; but he was at last shot, and recognized from his having no tail. You may be quite sure when you hear of a tiger having no tail that it is some unfortunate man who has eaten of that root, and of all the tigers he will be found the most mischievous."[1]

This is a curious reversal of the ordinary theory regarding the tail of the tiger, to which a murderous strength is attributed. A Hindu proverb says that the hair of a tiger's tail may be the means of losing one's life. This has been compared by Professor De Gubernatis with the tiger Mantikora spoken of by Ktesias, which has on its tail hairs which are darts thrown by it for the purpose of defence.[2]

A Nepâl legend describes how some children made a clay image of a tiger, and thinking the figure incomplete without a tongue, went to fetch a leaf to supply the defect. On their return they found that Bhairava had entered the image and had begun to devour their sheep. The image of Bâgh Bhairava and the deified children are still to be seen at this place. We have the same legend in the Panchatantra and the tales of Somadeva, where four Brâhmans resuscitate a tiger and are devoured by it.[3]

We have many instances in the folk-tales of the tiger be-

[1] "Rambles and Recollections," i. 154 sqq.
[2] "Zoological Mythology," i. 160 sq.
[3] Wright, "History," 161; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 348 sq.

fooled In one of the tales told by the Mânjhis of Mirzapur the goat has kids in the tiger's den, and when he arrives she makes her kids squall and pretends that she wants some tiger's flesh for them.[1] In a Panjâbi tale the farmer's wife rides up to the tiger calling out, "I hope I may find a tiger in this field, for I have not tasted tiger's flesh since the day before yesterday, when I killed three," whereupon the tiger runs away. The tale which tells how the jackal succeeds in getting the tiger back into the cage and thus saves the Brâhman is common in Indian folk-lore.[2]

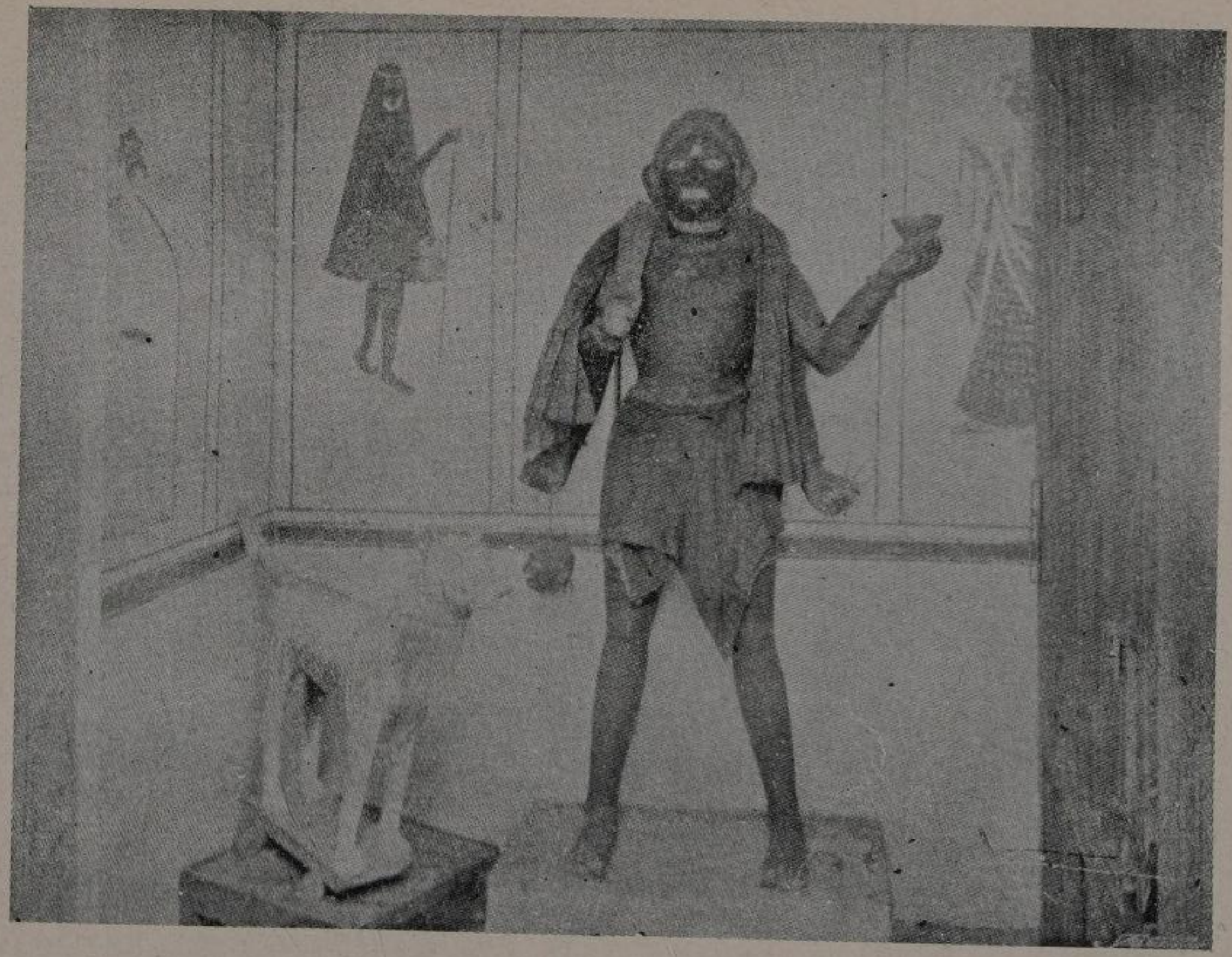
## DOG-WORSHIP.

In the Nepâl legend which we have been discussing we find Bhairava associated with the tîger, but his prototype, the local godling Bhairon, has the dog as his sacred animal, and his is the only temple in Benares into which the dog is admitted.[3]

Two conflicting lines of thought seem to meet in dog-worship. As Mr. Campbell says, "There is a good house-guarding dog, and an evil scavenging and tomb-haunting dog. Some of the products of the dog are so valued in driving off spirits that they seem to be a distinct element in the feeling of respect shown to the dog. Still it seems better to consider the dog as a man-eater, and to hold that, like the tiger, this was the original reason why the dog was considered a guardian."[4] It is perhaps in this connection that the dog is associated with Yama, the god of death.

An ancient epithet of the dog is Kritajna, "he that is mindful of favours," which is also a title of Siva. The most touching episode of the Mahâbhârata is where Yudishthira refuses to enter the heaven of Indra without his favourite dog, which is really Yama in disguise. These dogs of Yama probably correspond to the Orthros and Kerberos of the Greeks, and Kerberos has been connected etymologically

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 65.
[2] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 116; Campbell, "Santâl Folk-tales," 40; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 146.
[3] Sherring, "Sacred City," 63, 65.
[4] "Notes," 276.



BHAIRON AND HIS DOG.

with Sarvari, which is an epithet of the night, meaning originally "dark" or "pale."[1] The same idea shows itself in the Pârsi respect for the dog, which may be traced to the belief of the early Persians. The dog's muzzle is placed near the mouth of the dying Pârsi in order that it may receive his parting breath and bear it to the waiting angel, and the destruction of a corpse by dogs is looked on with no feeling of abhorrence. The same idea is found in Buddhism, where on the early coins "the figure of a dog in connection with a Buddhist Stûpa recalls to mind the use to which the animal was put in the bleak highlands of Asia in the preferential form of sepulchre over exposure to birds and wild beasts in the case of deceased monks or persons of position in Tibet. Strange and horrible as it may seem to us to be devoured by domestic dogs, trained and bred for the purpose, it was the most honourable form of burial among Tibetans."[2]

The Kois of Central India hold in great respect the Pândava brethren Arjuna and Bhîma. The wild dogs or Dhol are regarded as the Dûtas or messengers of the heroes, and the long black beetles which appear in large numbers at the beginning of the hot weather are called the Pândavas' goats. None of them will on any account interfere with these divine dogs, even when they attack their cattle.[3]

## DOG-WORSHIP. BHAIRON.

In modern times dog-worship appears specially in connection with the cultus of Bhairon, the Brâhmanical Bhairava, the Bhairoba of Western India. No Marâtha will lift his hand against a dog, and in Bombay many Hindus worship the dog of Kâla Bhairava, though the animal is considered unclean by them. Khandê Râo or Khandoba or Khandoji is regarded as an incarnation of Siva and much

[1] Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," ii. 336.
[2] "Journal Asiatic Society, Bengal," lix. 212. The horror with which the Homeric Greeks regarded the eating of a corpse by dogs comes out very strongly in the Iliad.
[3] "Indian Antiquary," v. 358 sq.

worshipped by Marâthas. He is most frequently represented as riding on horseback and attended by a dog and accompanied by his wife Malsurâ, another form of Pârvatî. His name is usually derived from the Khanda or sword which he carries, but Professor Oppert without much probability would connect it with that of the aboriginal Khândhs who are supposed to have been original settlers in Khândesh, after whom it was called.[1] In many temples of Bhaironnâth, as at Benares and Hardwâr, he is depicted on the wall in a deep blue colour approaching to black, and behind him is the figure of the dog on which he rides. Sweetmeat sellers make little images of a dog in sugar, which are presented to the deity as an offering.

At Lohâru, in the Panjâb, a common-looking grave is much respected by the Hindus. It is said to contain the remains of a dog formerly possessed by the chief of the victorious Thâkurs, which is credited with having done noble service in battle, springing up and seizing the wounded warriors' throats, many of whom it slew. Finally it was killed and buried on the spot with beat of drum, and has since been an object of worship and homage. "Were it not," says General Cunningham, "for the Sagparast of Naishapur, mentioned in Khusru's charming Darvesh tales, this example of dog-worship would probably be unique."[2] This is, it is hardly necessary to say, a mistake.

Thus, close to Bulandshahr, there is a grove with four tombs, which are said to be the resting-place of three holy men and their favourite dog, which died when the last of the saints departed this life. They were buried together, and their tombs are held in much respect by Muhammadans.[3]

In Pûna, Dattatreya is guarded by four dogs which are said to stand for the four Vedas, and at Jejuri and Nâgpur children are dedicated to the dogs of Khandê Râo. The Ghisâdis, on the seventh day after a birth, go and worship water, and on coming back rub their feet on a dog. At

[1] "Original Inhabitants," 157 sq.
[2] "Archæological Reports," xxiii. 26.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 118.

Dharwâr, on the fair day of the Dasahra at Malahâri's temple, the Vâggayya ministrants dress in blue woollen coats and meet with bell and skins tied round their middles, the pilgrims barking and howling like dogs. Each Vâggayya has a wooden bowl into which the pilgrims put milk and plantains. Then the Vâggayyas lay down the bowls, fight with each other like dogs, and putting their mouths into the bowls, eat the contents.[1] In Nepâl, there is a festival, known as the Khichâ Pûjâ, in which worship is done to dogs, and garlands of flowers are placed round the neck of every dog in the country.[2] Among the Gonds, if a dog dies or is born, the family has to undergo purification.[3]

## DOGS IN FOLK-LORE: THE BETHGELERT LEGEND.

The famous tale of Bethgelert, the faithful hound which saves the child of his master from the wolf and is killed by mistake, appears all through the folk-tales and was probably derived from India. In the Indian version the dog usually belongs to a Banya or to a Banjâra, who mortgages him to a merchant. The merchant is robbed and the dog discovers the stolen goods. In his gratitude the merchant ties round the neck of the dog a scrap of paper, on which he records that the debt has been satisfied. The dog returns to his original master, who upbraids him for deserting his post, and, without looking at the paper, kills him, only to be overcome by remorse when he learns the honesty of the faithful beast. This famous tale is told at Haidarâbâd, Lucknow, Sîtapur, Mirzapur, and Kashmîr. In its more usual form, as in the Panchatantra and the collection of Somadeva, the mungoose takes the place of the dog and kills the cobra on the baby's cradle.[4]

Throughout folk-lore the dog is associated with the

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 276 sq. [2] Wright, "History," 39 sq.
[3] Hislop, "Papers," 6.
[4] "Folk-lore," iii. 127; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 94, 148; iv. 46, 150, 173; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 18, 67; Knowles, "Folk-tales of Kashmîr," 36, 429; Clouston, "Popular Tales," ii. 166; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 90; "Gesta Romanorum," Introd. xlii.

spirits of the dead, as we have seen to be the case with Syâma, "the black one," and Sabala or Karvara, the "spotted ones," the attendants of Yama.[1] Hence the dog is regarded as the guardian of the household, which they protect from evil spirits. According to Aubrey,[2] "all over England a spayed bitch is accounted wholesome in a house; that is to say they have a strong belief that it keeps away evil spirits from haunting of a house." As in the Odyssey, the two swift hounds of Telemachus bear him company and recognize Athene when she is invisible to others, and the dogs of Virgil howl when the goddess approaches, so the Muhammadans believe that dogs recognize Azraîl, the angel of death, and in Northern India it is supposed that dogs have the power of seeing spirits, and when they see one they howl. In Shakespeare King Henry says:—

> "The owl shriek'd at thy birth, an evil sign;
> The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;
> Dogs howled and hideous tempests shook down trees."

Hence in all countries the howling of dogs in the vicinity of a house is an omen of approaching misfortune.

The respect for the dog is well shown in the case of the Bauris of Bengal, who will on no account kill a dog or touch its body, and the water of a tank in which a dog has been drowned cannot be used until an entire rainy season has washed the impurity away. They allege that as they kill cows and most other animals, they deem it right to fix on some beast which should be as sacred to them as the cow to the Brâhman, and they selected the dog because it was a useful animal when alive and not very nice to eat when dead, "a neat reconciliation of the twinges of conscience and cravings of appetite."[3]

Various omens are in the Panjâb drawn from dogs. When out hunting, if they lie on their backs and roll, as they generally do when they find a tuft of grass or soft ground, it shows that plenty of game will be found. If a

[1] Conway, "Demonology," i. 134; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 126 sq.
[2] "Remaines," 53.
[3] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 79 sq.

dog lies quietly on his back in the house, it is a bad omen, for the superstition runs that the dog is addressing heaven for support, and that some calamity is bound to happen.[1]

We have seen already that some of the Central Indian tribes respect the wild dog. The same is the case in the Hills, where they are known as "God's hounds," and no native sportsman will kill them.[2] In one of Grimm's tales we read that the "Lord God had created all animals, and had chosen out the wolf to be his dog," and the dogs of Odin were wolves.[3] Another sacred dog in Indian folk-lore is that of the hunter Shambuka. His master threw him into the sacred pool of Uradh in the Himâlaya. Coming out dripping, he shook some of the water on his owner, and such was the virtue of even this partial ablution that on their death both hunter and dog were summoned to the heaven of Siva.[4]

All over Northern India the belief in the curative power of the tongue of the dog widely prevails. In Ireland they say that a dried tongue of a fox will draw out thorns, however deep they be, and an old late Latin verse says:—

*In cane bis bina sunt, et lingua medicina*
*Naris odoratus, amor intiger, atque latratus.*[5]

Among Musalmâns the dog is impure. The vessel it drinks from must be washed seven times and scrubbed with earth. The Qurân directs that before a dog is slipped in chase of game, the sportsman should call out, "In the name of God, the great God!" Then all game seized by him becomes lawful food.

## THE GOAT.

The goat is another animal to which mystic powers are attributed. In the mythology of the West he is associated with Dionysos, Pan, and the Satyr. In England it is com-

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 88.
[2] "Journal Asiatic Society, Bengal," 1847, p. 234.
[3] "Household Tales," ii. 444.
[4] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 329.
[5] "Folk-lore," iv. 351; "Gesta Romanorum," 25.

monly believed that he is never seen for twenty-four hours together, and that once in this space he pays a visit to the Devil to have his beard combed.[1] The Devil, they say, sometimes appears in this form, which accounts for his horns and tail. The wild goat was associated with the worship of Artemis, the Arab unmarried goddess.[2] In the Râmâyana, Agamukhî, or "goat's face," is the witch who wishes Sîtâ to be torn to pieces.

Mr. Conway asks whether this idea about the goat is due to the smell of the animal, its butting and injury to plants, or was it demonized merely because of its uncanny and shaggy appearance?[3] Probably the chief reason is because it has a curious habit of occasionally shivering, which is regarded as caused by some indwelling spirit. The Thags in their sacrifice used to select two goats, black, and perfect in all their parts. They were bathed and made to face the west, and if they shook themselves and threw the water off their hair, they were regarded as a sacrifice acceptable to Devî. Hence in India a goat is led along a disputed boundary, and the place where it shivers is regarded as the proper line. Plutarch says that the Greeks would not sacrifice a goat if it did not shiver when water was thrown over it.

In the Panjâb it is believed that when a goat kills a snake it eats it and then ruminates, after which it spits out a Manka or bead, which, when applied to a snake-bite, absorbs the poison and swells. If it be then put in milk and squeezed, the poison drips out of it like blood, and the patient is cured. If it is not put in milk, it will burst to pieces.[4] It hence resembles the Ovum Anguinum, or Druid's Egg, to which reference has been already made.[5] If a person suffers from spleen, they take the spleen of a he-goat, if the patient be a male; or of a she-goat, if the patient be a female. It is rubbed on the region of the spleen seven times on a Sunday or Tuesday, pierced with acacia thorns and hung on a

[1] Brand, "Observations," 583. [2] Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 194.
[3] "Demonology," i. 122.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 15.
[5] Brand, "Observations," 785.

tree. As the goat's spleen dries, the spleen of the patient reduces

The horn is regarded as somehow most closely connected with the brain. So, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," Mrs. Quickly says: "If he had found the young man, he would have been horn mad," and Horace gives the advice, "*Fenum habet in cornu longe fuge*." Martial describes how in his time the Roman shrines were covered with horns, *Dissimulatque deum cornibus ora frequens*.[1]

It is for this reason that the local shrines in the Himâlaya are decorated with horns of the wild sheep, ibex, and goat. In Persia many houses are adorned with rams' heads fixed to the corners near the roof, which are to protect the building from misfortune. In Bilochistân and Afghanistân it is customary to place the horns of the wild goat and sheep on the walls of forts and mosques.[2] Akbar covered his Kos Minars or mile-stones with the horns of the deer he had killed. The conical support of the Banjâra woman's head-dress was originally a horn, and many classes of Faqîrs tie a piece of horn round their necks. We have the well-known horn of plenty, and it is very common in the folk-tales to find objects taken out of the ears or horns of the helpful animals.[3]

## GOAT AND TOTEMISM.

We perhaps get a glimpse of totemism in connection with the goat in some of the early Hindu legends. When Parusha, the primeval man, was divided into his male and female parts, he produced all the animals, and the goat was first formed out of his mouth. There is, again, a mystical connection between Agni, the fire god, Brâhmans, and goats, as between Indra, the Kshatriyas, and sheep, Vaisyas and kine, Sûdras and the horse. These may possibly have been tribal

[1] "Epigrams," i. 6.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iv. 131; Moorcroft, "Travels," i. 22; 'Journal Asiatic Society Bengal," 1840, p. 572; "Aîn-i-Akbari," i. 289.
[3] Miss Cox. "Cinderella," 473.

totems of the races by whom these animals were venerated.[1] The sheep, as we have already seen, is a totem of the Keriyas. The Aheriyas, a vagrant tribe of the North-Western Provinces, worship Mekhasura or Meshasura in the form of a ram.

## COW AND BULL WORSHIP.

But the most famous of these animal totems or fetishes is the cow or bull. According to the school of comparative mythology the bull which bore away Europe from Kadmos is the same from which the dawn flies in the Vedic hymn. He, according to this theory, is "the bull Indra, which, like the sun, traverses the heaven, bearing the dawn from east to west. But the Cretan bull, like his fellow in the Gnossian labyrinth, who devours the tribute children from the city of the Dawn goddess, is a dark and malignant monster, akin to the throttling snake who represents the powers of night and darkness."[2] This may be so, but the identification of primitive religion, in all its varied phases, with the sun or other physical phenomena is open to the obvious objection that it limits the ideas of the early Aryans to the weather and their dairies, and antedates the regard for the cow to a period when the animal was held in much less reverence than it is at present.

## RESPECT FOR THE COW MODERN.

That the respect for the cow is of comparatively modern date is best established on the authority of a writer, himself a Hindu. "Animal food was in use in the Epic period, and the cow and bull were often laid under requisition. In the Aitareya Brâhmana, we learn that an ox, or a cow which suffers miscarriage, is killed when a king or honoured guest is received. In the Brâhmana of the Black Yajur Veda the kind and character of the cattle which should be slaughtered in minor sacrifices for the gratification of particular divinities

[1] Muir, "Ancient Sanskrit Texts," i. 24 sq.; iii. 166, 310 sq.; McLennan, "Fortnightly Review," 1870, 198 sq.

[2] Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," i. 107, 437 sq.; ii. 49 sq.

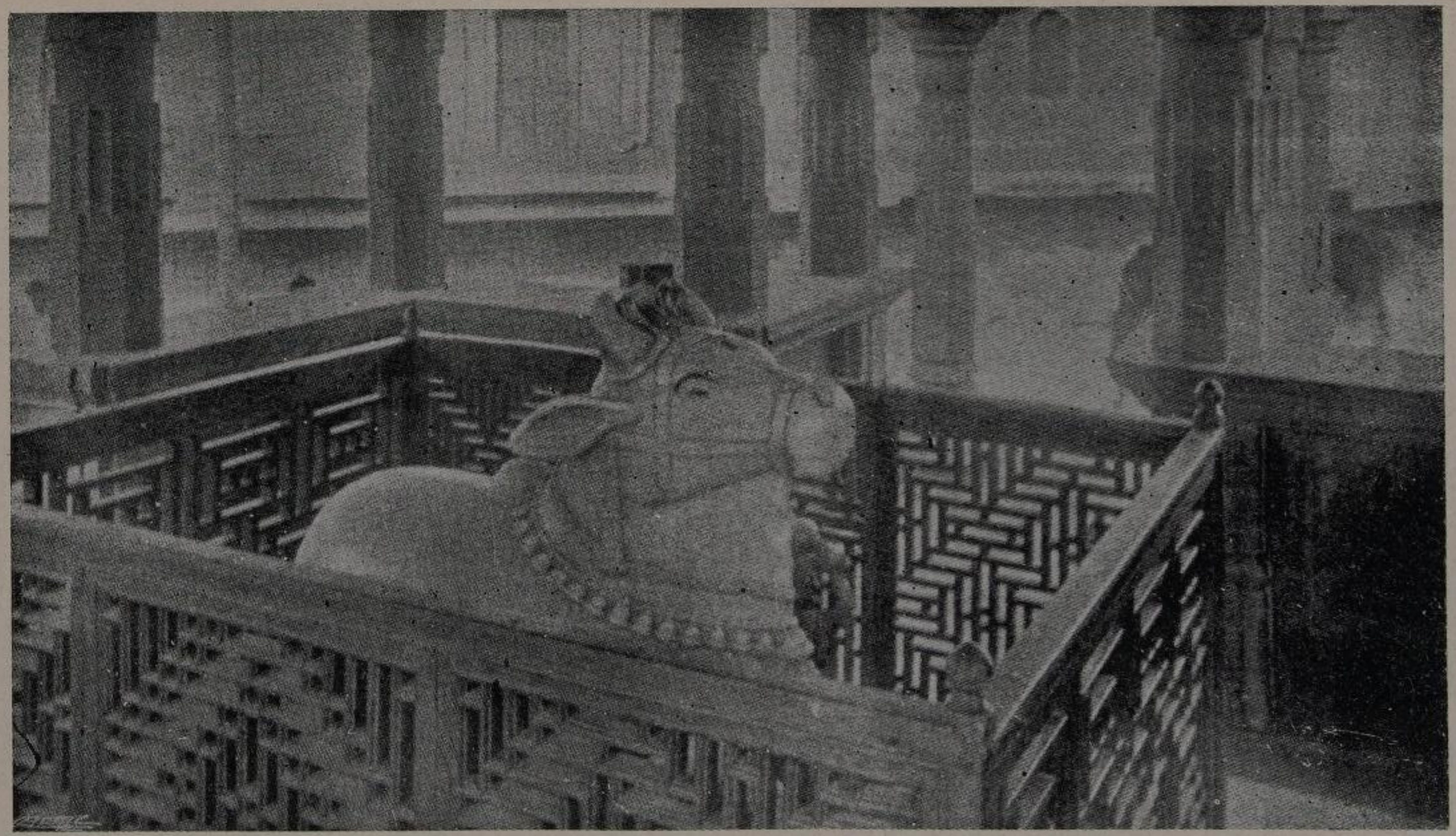


IMAGE OF THE SACRED BULL.

are laid down in detail. Thus a dwarf one is to be sacrificed to Vishnu, a drooping-horned bull to Indra, a thick-legged cow to Vâyu, a barren cow to Vishnu and Varuna, a black cow to Pûshan, a cow having two colours to Mitra and Varuna, a red cow to Indra, and so on. In a larger and more important ceremonial, like the Aswamedha, no less than one hundred and eighty domestic animals, including horses, bulls, goats, sheep, deer, etc., were sacrificed.

"The same Brâhmana lays down instructions for carving, and the Gopatha Brâhmana tells us who received the portions. The priests got the tongue, the neck, the shoulder, the rump, the legs, etc., while the master of the house wisely appropriated to himself the sirloin, and his wife had to be satisfied with the pelvis. Plentiful libations of Soma beer were to be allowed to wash down the meat. In the Satapatha Brâhmana we have a detailed account of the slaughter of a barren cow and its cooking. In the same Brâhmana there is an amusing discussion as to the propriety of eating the meat of an ox or cow. The conclusion is not very definite. 'Let him (the priest) not eat the flesh of the cow and the ox. Nevertheless Yajnavalkya said (taking apparently a very practical view of the matter), 'I, for one, eat it, provided it is tender.'"[1]

The evidence that cows were freely slaughtered in ancient times could be largely extended. It is laid down in the early laws that the meat of milch cows and oxen may be eaten, and a guest is called a Goghna or "cow-killer," because a cow was killed for his entertainment.[2] In the Grihya Sûtra we have a description of the sacrifice of an ox to Kshetrapati, "the lord of the fields." In another ancient ritual the sacrifice of a cow is stated to be very similar to that of the Satî, and, according to an early legend, kine were created from Parusha, the primal male, and are to be eaten as they were formed from the receptacle of food.[3]

[1] Romesh Chandra Datt, "History of Indian Civilization," i. 253 sq.
[2] Bühler, "Sacred Laws," Part i. 64, 119, note.
[3] Rajendra Lâla Mitra, "Indo-Aryans," ii. 134; Muir, "Ancient Sanskrit Texts," i. 24 sqq.

It need hardly be said that the worship of the cow is not peculiar to India, but prevails widely in various parts of the world.[1]

## ORIGIN OF COW-WORSHIP.

The explanation of the origin of cow-worship has been a subject of much controversy. The modern Hindu, if he has formed any distinct ideas at all on the subject, bases his respect for the cow on her value for supplying milk, and for general agricultural purposes. The Panchagâvya, or five products of the cow—milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung—are efficacious as scarers of demons, are used as remedies in disease, and play a very important part in domestic ritual Gaurochana, a bright yellow pigment prepared from the urine or bile of the cow, or, as is said by some, vomited by her or found in her head, is used for making the sectarial mark, and as a sedative, tonic, and anthelmintic. In Bombay it is specially used as a remedy for measles, which is considered to be a spirit disease.[2]

There is, again, something to be said for the theory which finds in these animals tribal totems and fetishes.[3] We have a parallel case among the Jews, where the bull was probably the ancient symbol of the Hyksos, which the Israelites having succeeded them could adopt, especially as it may have been retained in use by their confederates the Midianites; and it appears in the earliest annals of Israel as a token of the former supremacy of Joseph and his tribe, and was subsequently adopted as an image of Iahveh himself.

So, speaking of Egypt, Mr. Frazer writes: "Osiris was regularly identified with the bull Apis of Memphis and the bull Mnevis of Heliopolis. But it is hard to say whether

[1] Schliemann, "Ilios," 112; Rawlinson, "Herodotus," ii. 27 sq., 41; Ewald, "History of Israel," ii. 4; Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 196; Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 40.

[2] Campbell, "Notes," 285.

[3] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," i. 3 sqq.; Cox, "Introduction," 151 sqq.; Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," i. 236 sq.; Goldziher, "Mythology among the Hebrews," 226, 343; Wake, "Serpent-worship," 35; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 340; McLennan, "Fortnightly Review," 1870, p. 199.

these bulls were embodiments of him as the corn spirit, as the red oxen appear to have been, or whether they were not entirely distinct deities which got fused with Osiris by syncretism. The fact that these two bulls were worshipped by all the Egyptians, seems to put them on a different footing from the ordinary sacred animals, whose cults were purely local. Hence, if the latter were evolved from totems, as they probably were, some other origin would have to be found for the worship of Apis and Mnevis. If these bulls were not originally embodiments of the corn god Osiris, they may possibly be descendants of the sacred cattle worshipped by a pastoral people. If this were so, ancient Egypt would exhibit a stratification of the three great types of religion corresponding to the three great stages of society. Totemism or (roughly speaking) the worship of wild animals—the religion of society in the hunting stage—would be represented by the worship of the local sacred animals; the worship of cattle—the religion of society in the pastoral stage—would be represented by the cults of Apis and Mnevis; and the worship of cultivated plants, especially of corn—the religion of society in the agricultural stage—would be represented by the worship of Osiris and Isis. The Egyptian reverence for cows, which were never killed, might belong either to the second or third of these stages."[1]

There is some evidence that the same process of religious development may have taken place in India. It is at least significant that the earlier legends represent Indra as created from a cow; and we know that Indra was the Kuladevatâ or family godling of the race of the Kusikas, as Krishna was probably the clan deity of some powerful confederation of Râjput tribes. Cow-worship is thus closely connected with Indra and with Krishna in his forms as the "herdman god," Govinda or Gopâla; and it is at least plausible to conjecture that the worship of the cow may have been due to the absorption of the animal as a tribal totem of the two races, who venerated these two divinities.

Further, the phallic significance of the worship, in its

[1] "Golden Bough," ii. 60.

modern form at least, and its connection with fertility cannot be altogether ignored.[1] This is particularly shown in the close connection between Siva's bull Nandi and the Lingam worship; and there seems reason to suspect that the bull is intended to intercept the evil influences which in the popular belief are continually emitted from the female principle through the Yonî. As we have already seen, the dread of this form of pollution is universal. Hence when the Lingam is set up in a new village the people are careful in turning the spout of the Yonî towards the jungle, and not in the direction of the roads and houses, lest its evil influence should be communicated to them; and in order still further to secure this object, the bull Nandi is placed sitting as a guardian between the Yonî and the inhabited site.[2]

Cow-worship assumes another form in connection with the theory of transmigration. It has become part of the theory that the soul migrates into the cow immediately preceding its assumption of the human form, and she escorts the soul across the dreaded river Vaitaranî, which bounds the lower world.

## COW-WORSHIP: ITS LATER DEVELOPMENT.

Though cow-worship was little known in the Vedic period, by the time of the compilation of the Institutes of Manu it had become part of the popular belief. He classes the slaughter of a cow or bull among the deadly sins; "the preserver of a cow or a Brâhman atones for the crime of killing a priest;"[3] and we find constant references in the mediæval folk-lore to the impiety of the Savaras and other Drâvidian races who killed and ate the sacred animal. Saktideva one day, "as he was standing on the roof of his palace, saw a Chandâla coming along with a load of cow's flesh, and said to his beloved Vindumatî: 'Look, slender one! How can the evil-doer eat the flesh of cows, that are the object of veneration to the three worlds?' Then Vindumatî, hear-

[1] Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," i. 158.
[2] Sellon, "Memoirs Anthropological Society of London," i. 328.
[3] "Institutes," xi. 60, 80.

ing that, said to her husband: 'The wickedness of this act is inconceivable; what can we say in palliation of it? I have been born in this race of fishermen for a very small offence owing to the might of cows. But what can atone for this man's sin?'"[1]

## RE-BIRTH THROUGH THE COW.

When the horoscope forebodes some crime or special calamity, the child is clothed in scarlet, a colour which repels evil influences, and tied on the back of a new sieve, which, as we have seen, is a powerful fetish. This is passed through the hindlegs of a cow, forward through the forelegs towards the mouth, and again in the reverse direction, signifying the new birth from the sacred animal. The usual worship and aspersion take place, and the father smells his child, as the cow smells her calf. This rite is known as the Hiranyagarbha, and not long since the Mahârâja of Travancore was passed in this way through a cow of gold.[2]

The same idea is illustrated in the legend of the Pushkar Lake, which probably represents a case of that fusion of races which undoubtedly occurred in ancient times. The story runs that Brahma proposed to do worship there, but was perplexed where he should perform the sacrifice, as he had no temple on earth like the other gods. So he collected all the other gods, but the sacrifice could not proceed as Savitrî alone was absent; and she refused to come without Lakshmî, Pârvatî, and Indrânî. On hearing of her refusal, Brahma was wroth, and said to Indra: "Search me out a girl that I may marry her and commence the sacrifice, for the jar of ambrosia weighs heavy on my head." Accordingly Indra went and found none but a Gûjar's daughter, whom he purified, and passing her through the body of a cow, brought her to Brahma, telling him what he had done. Vishnu said: "Brâhmans and cows are really identical; you have taken her from the womb of a cow, and this may be considered a second birth." Siva said: "As she has passed through a

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 227.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 215.

cow, she shall be called Gâyatrî." The Brâhmans agreed that the sacrifice might now proceed; and Brahma having married Gâyatrî, and having enjoined silence upon her, placed on her head the jar of ambrosia and the sacrifice was performed.[1]

## RESPECT PAID TO THE COW.

The respect paid to the cow appears everywhere in folk-lore. We have the cow Kâmadhenû, known also as Kâmadughâ or Kâmaduh, the cow of plenty, Savalâ, "the spotted one," and Surabhî, "the fragrant one," which grants all desires. Among many of the lower castes the cow-shed becomes the family temple.[2] In the old ritual, the bride, on entering her husband's house, was placed on a red bull's hide as a sign that she was received into the tribe, and in the Soma sacrifice the stones whence the liquor was produced were laid on the hide of a bull. When a disputed boundary is under settlement, a cow skin is placed over the head and shoulders of the arbitrator, who is thus imbued with the divine influence, and gives a just decision. It is curious that until quite recently there was a custom in the Hebrides of sewing up a man in the hide of a bull, and leaving him for the night on a hill-top, that he might become a spirit medium.[3] The pious Hindu touches the cow's tail at the moment of dissolution, and by her aid he is carried across the dread river of death. I have more than once seen a criminal ascend the scaffold with the utmost composure when he was allowed to grasp a cow's tail before the hangman did his office. The tail of the cow is also used in the marriage ritual, and the tail of the wild cow, though nowadays only used by grooms, was once the symbol of power, and waved over the ruler to protect him from evil spirits. Quite recently I found that one of the chief Brâhman priests at the sacred pool of Hardwâr keeps

[1] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 914; "Râjputâna Gazetteer," ii. 67.

[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 39

[3] Miss Gordon-Cumming, "From the Hebrides to the Himâlaya," i. 141.

a wild cow's tail to wave over his clients, and scare demons from them when they are bathing in the Brahma Kund or sacred pool.

The Hill legend tells how Siva once manifested himself in his fiery form, and Vishnu and Brahma went in various directions to see how far the light extended. On their return Vishnu declared that he had been unable to find out how far the light prevailed; but Brahma said that he had gone beyond its limits. Vishnu then called on Kâmadhenû, the celestial cow, to bear testimony, and she corroborated Brahma with her tongue, but she shook her tail by way of denying the statement. So Vishnu cursed her that her mouth should be impure, but that her tail should be held holy for ever.[1]

## MODERN COW-WORSHIP.

There are numerous instances of modern cow-worship. The Jâts and Gûjars adore her under the title of Gâû Mâtâ, "Mother cow." The cattle are decorated and supplied with special food on the Gopashtamî or Gokulashtamî festival, which is held in connection with the Krishna cultus. In Nepâl there is a Newâri festival, known as the Gâê Jâtra, or cow feast, when all persons who have lost relations during the year ought to disguise themselves as cows and dance round the palace of the king.[2] In many of the Central Indian States, about the time of the Diwâlî, the Maun Charâûn, or silent tending of cattle, is performed. The celebrants rise at daybreak, wash and bathe, anoint their bodies with oil, and hang garlands of flowers round their necks. All this time they remain silent and communicate their wants by signs. When all is ready they go to the pasture in procession in perfect silence. Each of them holds a peacock's feather over his shoulder to scare demons. They remain in silence with the cattle for an hour or two, and then return home. This is followed by

[1] Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, ii. 771; Wright, "History of Nepâl," 82.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 109.

an entertainment of wrestling among the Ahîrs or cow-herds. When night has come, a gun is fired, and the Mâhârâja breaks his fast and speaks. The rite is said to be in commemoration of Krishna feeding the cows in the pastures of the land of Braj.[1]

During an eclipse, the cow, if in calf, is rubbed on the horns and belly with red ochre to repel the evil influence, and prevent the calf being born blemished. Cattle are not worked on the Amâvas or Ides of the month. There are many devices, such as burning tiger's flesh, and similar prophylactics, in the cow-house to drive away the demon of disease. So, on New Year's Day the Highlander used to fumigate his cattle shed with the smoke of juniper.[2] Cow hair is regarded as an amulet against disease and danger, in the same way as the hair of the yak was valued by the people of Central Asia in the time of Marco Polo.[3] An ox with a fleshy excrescence on his eye is regarded as sacred, and is known as Nadiya or Nandi, "the happy one," the title of the bull of Siva. He is not used for agriculture, but given to a Jogi, who covers him with cowry shells, and carries him about on begging excursions. One of the most unpleasant sights at the great bathing fairs, such as those of Prayâg or Hardwâr, is the malformed cows and oxen which beggars of this class carry about and exhibit. The Gonds kill a cow at a funeral, and hang the tail on the grave as a sign that the ceremonies have been duly performed.[4] The Kurkus sprinkle the blood of a cow on the grave, and believe that if this be not done the spirit of the departed refuses to rest, and returns upon earth to haunt the survivors.[5] The Vrishotsarga practised by Hindus on the eleventh day after death, when a bull calf is branded and let loose in the name of deceased, is apparently an attempt to shift on the animal the burden of the sins of the dead man, if it be not a survival of an actual sacrifice.

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 154.
[2] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 18.
[3] Yule, "Marco Polo," ii. 341.
[4] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 283.
[5] "Indian Antiquary," i. 348 sq.

## FEELING AGAINST COW-KILLING.

Of the unhappy agitation against cow-killing, which has been in recent years such a serious problem to the British Government in Northern India, nothing further can be said here. To the orthodox Hindu, killing a cow, even accidentally, is a serious matter, and involves the feeding of Brâhmans and the performance of pilgrimages. In the Hills a special ritual is prescribed in the event of a plough ox being killed by accident.[1] The idea that misfortune follows the killing of a cow is common. It used to be said that storms arose on the Pîr Panjâl Pass in Kashmîr if a cow was killed.[2]

General Sleeman gives a case at Sâgar, where an epidemic was attributed to the practice of cattle slaughter, and a popular movement arose for its suppression.[3] Sindhia offered Sir John Malcolm in 1802 an additional cession of territory if he would introduce an article into the Treaty with the British Government prohibiting the slaughter of cows within the territory he had been already compelled to abandon. The Emperor Akbar ordered that cattle should not be killed during the Pachûsar, or twelve sacred days observed by the Jainas; Sir John Malcolm gives a copy of the original Firmân.[4] Cow-killing is to this day prohibited in orthodox Hindu States, like Nepâl.

## BULL-WORSHIP AMONG BANJÂRAS.

There is a good example of bull-worship among the wandering tribe of Banjâras. "When sickness occurs, they lead the sick man to the foot of the bullock called Hatâdiya; for though they say that they pay reverence to images, and that their religion is that of the Sikhs, the object of their worship is this Hatâdiya, a bullock devoted to the god Bâlajî. On this animal no burden is ever laid,

[1] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 913.
[2] Jarrett, "Aîn-i-Akbari," ii. 348, quoting Erskine; "Babar," Introduction, 47.
[3] "Rambles," i. 199 sqq.
[4] "Central India," i. 329, note; ii. 164.

but he is decorated with streamers of red-dyed silk and tinkling bells, with many brass chains and rings on neck and feet, and strings of cowry shells and silken tassels hanging in all directions. He moves steadily at the head of the convoy, and the place he lies down on when tired, that they make their halting-place for the day. At his feet they make their vows when difficulties overtake them, and in illness, whether of themselves or cattle, they trust to his worship for a cure." The respect paid by Banjâras to cattle seems, however, to be diminishing. Once upon a time they would never sell cattle to a butcher, but nowadays it is an every-day occurrence.[1]

## SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT CATTLE.

Infinite are the superstitions about cattle, their marks, and every kind of peculiarity connected with them, and this has been embodied in a great mass of rural rhymes and proverbs which are always on the lips of the people. Thus, for instance, it is unlucky for a cow to calve in the month of Bhâdon. The remedy is to swim it in a stream, sell it to a Muhammadan, or in the last resort give it away to a Gujarâti Brâhman. Here may be noticed the curious prejudice against the use of a cow's milk, which prevails among some tribes such as the Hos and some of the aboriginal tribes of Bengal. The latter use a species of wild cattle, the Mithun, for milking purposes, but will not touch the milk of the ordinary cow.[2]

## THE BUFFALO.

The respect paid to the cow does not fully extend to the buffalo. The buffalo is the vehicle of Yama, the god of death. The female buffalo is in Western India regarded as the incarnation of Savitrî, wife of Brahma, the Creator.

[1] Balfour, "Journal Asiatic Society Bengal," xiii. N.S.; Gunthorpe, "Notes on Crimmal Tribes of Berâr," 36.

[2] Ball, "Jungle Life," 165; "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 60; "Calcutta Review," lxxx. 53, 58.

Durgâ or Bhavânî killed the buffalo-shaped Asura Mahisa, Mahisâsura, after whom Maisûr is called. According to the legend as told in the Mârkandeya Purâna, Ditî, having lost all her sons, the Asuras, in the fight with the gods, turned herself into a buffalo in order to annihilate them. She underwent such terrible austerities to propitiate Brahma, that the whole world was shaken and the saint Suparsva disturbed at his devotions. He cursed Ditî that her son should be in the shape of a buffalo, but Brahma so far mitigated the curse that only his head was to be that of a buffalo. This was Mahisâsura, who ill-treated the gods, until they appealed to Vishnu and Siva, who jointly produced a lovely representation of a Bhavânî, the Mahisâsurmardanî, who slew the monster. This Mahisâsura is supposed to be the origin of the godling Mahasoba, worshipped in Western India in the form of a rude stone covered with red lead.

Another of these buffalo demons is Dundubhi, "he that roars like the sound of the kettle-drum," who in the Râmâyana bursts with his horns the cavern of Bali, son of Indra and king of monkeys. Bali seized him by the horns and dashed him tc pieces. The comparative mythologists regard him as one of the forms of the cloud monster the sun.[1]

Sadasiva, one of the forms of Mahâdeva, took the form of a buffalo to escape the Pândavas, and sank into the ground at Kedârnâth. The upper portion of his body is said to have come to the surface at Mukhâr Bind in Nepâl, where he is worshipped as Pasupatinâtha. When the Pândavas were freed from their guilt, they in their gratitude built five temples in honour of the hinder parts of the deity, which are now known as the Pânch Kedâr-Kedarnâth, Madhya Maheswar, Rudranâth, Tungunâth, and Kalpeswar.

The buffalo is constantly sacrificed at shrines in honour of Durgâ Devî. The Toda worship of the buffalo is familiar to all students of Indian ethnology.

[1] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," i. 75.

## THE ANTELOPE.

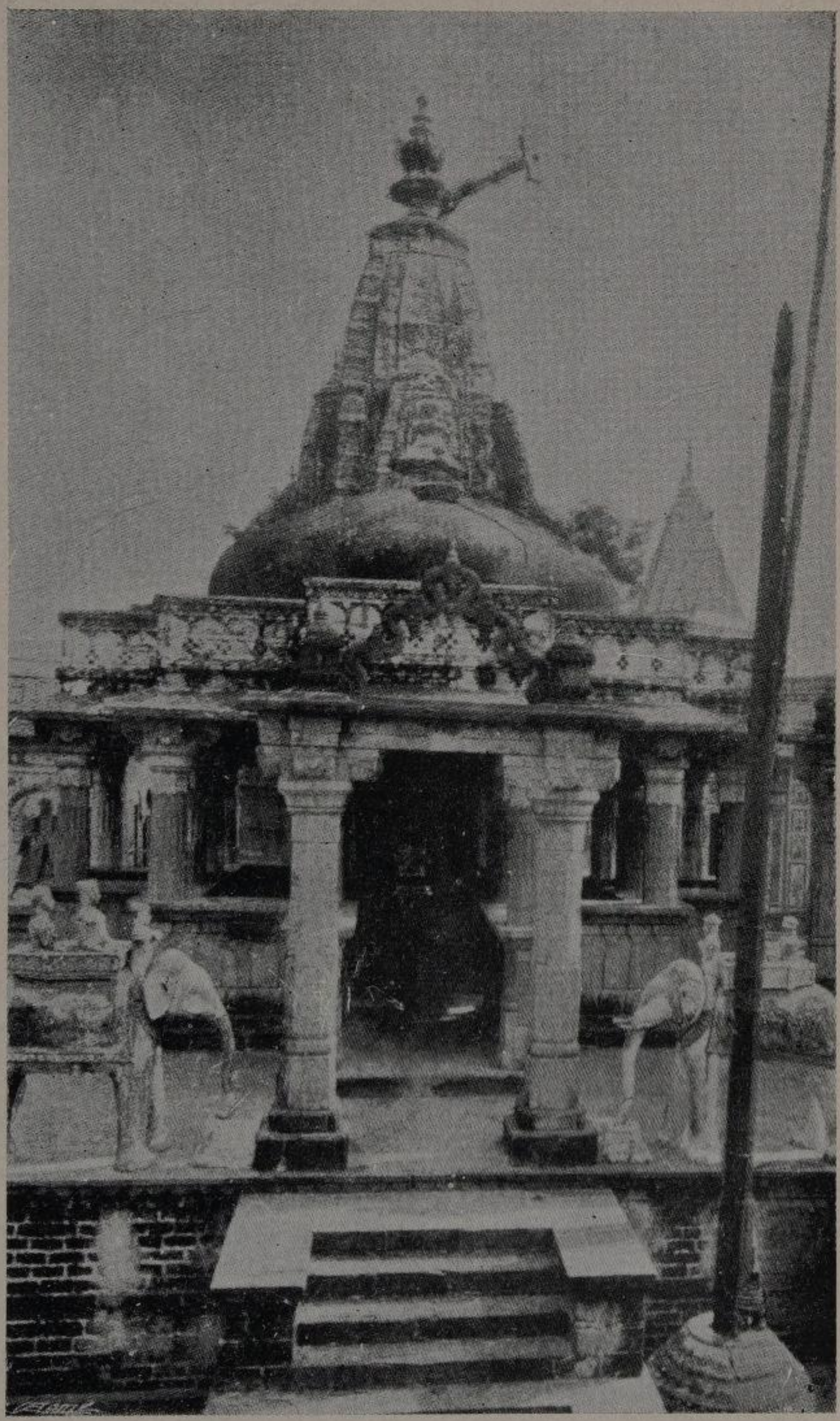
The black buck was in all probability the tribal totem of some of the races occupying the country anciently known as Âryâvarta. Mr. Campbell accounts for the respect paid to the animal by the use of hartshorn as a remedy for faintness, swoons, and nervous disorders.[1] But this hardly explains the respect paid to it, and the use of its dung by the Bengal Parhaiyas instead of cowdung to smear their floors looks as if it were based on totemism.[2] This too is shown by the regard paid its skin. As Mr. Frazer has proved, it is a custom among many savage tribes to retain the skin as an image of the deity which the animal represented.[3] Hence according to the old ritual, the skin of the antelope was the prescribed dress of the student of theology, and it is still the seat of the ascetic.[4]

The antelope constantly appears in the folk-tales as a sort of *Deus ex machinâ*, which leads the hero astray in the chase and brings him to the home of the ogress or the ensorcelled maiden.[5] In the Mahâbhârata, the King Parîkshit is led astray by a gazelle, and King Pandu dies when he meets his wife Madrî, because he had once killed under similar circumstances a gazelle with his mate. In the Vishnu Purâna, Bharata loses the fruits of his austerities by becoming enamoured of a fawn. These fairy hinds appear throughout the whole range of folk-lore. A Nepâlese legend tells how the three gods Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma once appeared in the form of deer, whence the place where they were seen is known as Mrigasthali.[6]

## THE ELEPHANT.

The elephant naturally claims worship as the type of strength and wisdom. To the rustic he impersonates

[1] "Notes," 287. [2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 131.
[3] "Golden Bough," ii. 93. [4] Manu, "Institutes," ii. 41.
[5] Burton, "Arabian Nights," ii. 508; Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 166; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i.; "Gesta Romanorum," Tale xviii.
[6] Wright, "History," 81.



THE ELEPHANT A TEMPLE WARDEN.

Ganesa, the god of wisdom, the remover of obstacles, who is propitiated at the commencement of any important enterprise, such as marriage and the like. Many legends are told to account for his elephant head. One tells how his mother Pârvatî was so proud of her baby that she asked Sani to look at him, forgetting the baneful effects of the look of the ill-omened deity. When he looked at the child its head was burned to ashes, and Brahma, to console her, told her to fix on the first head she could find, which happened to be that of the elephant. By another account she put Ganesa to guard the door while she was bathing, and when he refused to allow Siva to enter, the angry god cut off his head, which was afterwards replaced by that of the elephant. Again, one of his tusks was broken off by Parasurâma with the axe which Siva, father of Ganesa, had given him.

Again, there are the Lokapâlas, the eight supporters of the world. These eight pairs of elephants support the earth. Indra with Airâvata and Abhramu support the east; Agni with Pundarîka and Kapilâ the south-east; Yama with Vâmana and Pingalâ the south; Sûrya with Kumuda and Anupamâ the south-west; Varuna with Anjana and Anjanavatî the west; Vâyu with Pushpadanta and Subhadantî the north-west; Kuvera on the north with Sarvabhauma, and Soma on the north-east with Supratîka. As usual, there are differences in the enumeration.

From these all the modern elephants are descended. As Abul Fazl writes: "When occasion arises people read incantations in their names and address them in worship. They also think that every elephant in the world is offspring of one of them. Thus, elephants of a white skin and white hairs are related to the first, and elephants with a large head and long ears, of a fierce and bold temper, and eyelids far apart, belong to the second. Such as are good-looking, black, and high in the back, are the offspring of the third. If tall, ungovernable, quick in understanding, short-haired, and with red and black eyes, they come from the fourth. If bright black, with one tusk longer than the other, with a

white breast and belly, and long and thick forefeet, from the fifth. If fearful, with prominent veins, a short hump and ears, and a long trunk, from the sixth. If thin-bellied, red-eyed, and with a long trunk, from the seventh. And if of a combination of the preceding seven qualities, from the eighth."[1]

Through India the reverence for the white elephant of Burma and Siam has arisen. The figure of the elephant appears on some of the pillars of Asoka. There is an elephant gate at Fatehpur Sikri, one of the King Huvishka at Mathura, and another connected with the dynasty of Kanauj at Dabhâon in the Azamgarh District. Delhi contains the remarkable elephant statues, believed by General Cunningham to have been erected in honour of Jaymal and Patta, the two Râjput heroes who defended the Fort of Chithor against Akbar.[2]

The elephant constantly occurs in folk-lore. In the projection of its forehead it possesses a pearl, known as the Kunjara Mani, or Gaja Mukta, which is invested with magical qualities. In the folk-tales the wooden horse of Troy is represented by an artificial elephant filled with soldiers; other elephants have the power of flying through the air; in other stories, as in one of La Fontaine's fables, an elephant selects a king by raising him up with his trunk; the elephant Kuvalyapîda is the guardian of a kingdom, and touching an elephant is one of the tests of a woman's chastity. We have also numerous instances of the metamorphosis of human beings into elephants.[3]

The hair of the elephant's tail is in high repute as an amulet, and little village children, when an elephant passes, pat the dust where his feet have rested and sing a song, of which one version is—

*Hâthi hâthi, bâr dê*
*Sone kî tarwâr dê—*

"Give us a hair, elephant, like a sword of gold."

[1] Blochmann, "Aîn-i-Akbari," i. 121.

[2] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 8, 73, 105, 188; Cunningham "Archæological Reports," i. 225.

[3] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 73, 177, 328 sq.; ii. 102, 215, 500, 540; Knowles, "Kashmîr Folk-tales," 17.

In Europe, it may be noted, the hair from the tail of a horse is commonly regarded as a cure for wens.[1]

In the Fatehpur District there is an elephant turned into stone. The famous Jaychand of Kanauj, it is said, as in the Carthage legend, offered to Parâsara Rishi as many villages as an elephant could walk round. It traversed an enormous extent of country, and finally halted at Irâdatnagar, where it was turned into stone, and once a year an enormous fair is held in its honour.[2]

## THE CAT.

The cat is everywhere invested with demoniac qualities, and is the companion of the witch. In "Macbeth" the first witch says, "Thrice the brinded cat has mewed." Among Muhammadans the cat is a pure animal, and to kill a cat is very unlucky, and brings on trouble and sickness. So, among Hindus, the killing of a cat can be expiated only by the performance of the rite known as the Prajapati Yajna, which secures the birth of male issue. They say that Mahâdeva and Pârvatî were one day playing dice, and Pârvatî called in Ganesa in his form as a rat to upset the dice with his tail and cause her to make a good throw. Mahâdeva was wroth, and called in a demon like a cat, but he was afraid to kill Ganesa. Then Mahâdeva cursed any one in after days who should kill a cat. We have the same tale in the Rasâlu cycle, where the rat of Dhol Râja changes the course of the game between him and Râja Sarkap. The cat is respected because she is the vehicle of Shashthî, the protectress of children, and part of the orthodox Hindu rite at dinner is giving food to the cat. Among the Orâons, as we have seen, the birth fiend Chordeva comes in the form of a cat.

## THE RAT AND MOUSE.

The rat is sacred as the vehicle of Ganesa. In Bombay, "to call a rat a rat is considered by lower classes of Hindus

[1] Black, "Folk Medicine," 152.

[2] Führer, *loc. cit.*, 161.

as unlucky, and so they call him Undir Mâma, or 'the rat uncle.' He is so called because he is probably supposed to be the spirit of an uncle. It is considered a great sin to kill a rat, and so, when rats give trouble in a house, the women of the house make a vow to them that, if they cease troubling, sweet balls will be given to them on a certain day, and it is believed by the Hindus that when such a vow has been made, the rats cease troubling them for some time."[1] In parts of England it is believed that a field mouse creeping over the back of a sheep gives it paralysis, and that this can be cured only by shutting up a mouse in a hollow of the trunk of the witch elm or witch hazel tree and leaving it to die of famine.[2]

The curiously deformed idiot boys which are collected at the shrine of Shâh Daula at Gujarât are known from their wizened appearance as the rats of Shâh Daula.[3]

## THE SQUIRREL.

The little Indian squirrel is called in the Panjâb Rama Chandra Kâ Bhagat, or the saint of Râma Chandra, because when he was building the bridge across the strait to Lanka, the squirrel helped by shaking dust from his tail, and the god stroked it on the back, hence the dark marks which it bears to the present day. Many of the Drâvidian tribes claim descent from the squirrel.

## THE BEAR.

The bear is regarded as a scarer of disease, and sickly children are taken for a ride on the back of a tame bear or one of his hairs is worn round the neck as an amulet. It was Jâmbavat, the king of the bears, who carried off the celebrated amulet, Syamantaka. He was pursued by Krishna, to whom he surrendered the gem and gave him his daughter Jâmbavatî to wife. He afterwards with his army of bears assisted Râma in his invasion of Lanka.

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 267. [2] Brand, "Observations," 739.
[3] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iv. 2.

## THE JACKAL.

The jackal is an important character in the folk-tales, where he assumes the part taken in Europe by the fox. Many are the tales told of his acuteness. The pack is supposed to howl only at each watch of the night, and the leader says, *Main Dilli kâ Bádshâh hûn*—"I am King of Delhi" thrice, and his companions say, *Ho! ho! ho!*—"Yes! of course you are."

## THE HARE.

Of the hare in the moon we have spoken already, and also referred to the animal in connection with omens. In Cornwall, when a girl has loved not wisely but too well, she haunts her deceiver in the shape of a white hare.[1]

## BIRDS: THE CROW.

Passing on to birds, the crow is a famous totem or sacred bird.[2] It personifies in Indian tradition the soul of the dead man; hence, to give food to the crows, known in Northern India as Kâgaur, is equivalent to offering food to the Manes. Râma in the Râmâyana orders Sîtâ to make this offering, and Yama, in reward for its services, conceded to it the right of eating the funeral meats, for which reason the souls of the dead, when this food is given to the crows, are enabled to pass into a better world. Hence the bird is known as Balipushta or "nourished by offerings," and Balibhuj or "devourer of oblations."[3]

In the Mahâbhârata, the son of Drona, one of the few survivors of the Kauravas, sees an owl killing the crows on a sacred fig tree, and this suggests to him the idea of attacking the camp of the Pândavas. This contest of the owl and the crow forms the subject of one of the tales of Somadeva.[4]

[1] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 377.
[2] For the crow in English folk-lore, see Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 126; Gregor, "Folk-lore of N.E. Scotland," 135 sq.
[3] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 253 sq.; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," i. 27.
[4] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 64, 73.

The incident of the wicked crow, which bit the foot of Sîtâ, is related in the Râmâyana. The Bhâtus of Central India, a class of migratory athletes, worship Nârâyana and the bamboo, with which all their feats are performed. When they bury their dead they place rice and oil at the head of the grave, and stand near to worship whatever animal comes to eat the offerings. They draw the happiest omen of the state of the departed from crows visiting the spot.[1]

In the Garuda Purâna a tale is told of a wicked hunter who was killed by a tiger in the depths of the forest, and his ghost became a troublesome Bhût, until one day a crow carried off one of the bones and dropped it into the Ganges, when the sinner was at once carried in a heavenly chariot to the mansions of the blessed. This legend is localized in the Hills and tells how Karma Sarma was killed by a tiger in the forest. A crow took up one of his bones and carried it to the shrine at Tungkshetra, and such is the virtue of the soil there that the hunter was at once carried off to the heaven of Indra.[2]

Bhusundi is the legendary crow of the battlefield, who drinks the blood of the slain. He had more blood than he could drink in the wars of the two Asuras, Sumbha and Nisumbha, who contended with the gods. He just quenched his thirst in the wars of Râma, but broke his beak against the hard, dry ground, which had soaked in the small amount of blood shed by the comparatively degenerate heroes of the Mahâbhârata. He now croaks over the armies as they go out to war, and looks for some Armageddon, when his thirst will at last be satisfied.

Manifold are the ideas about crows and omens taken from their appearance and cawing. Some people think a crow has only one eye, which he shifts from one cavity to the other as he finds it convenient. In the Panjâb, if a crow picks up a woman's handkerchief and then drops it, she will not use it, but gives it to a beggar.[3] The brains of

[1] Balfour, "Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal," N.S. xiii.
[2] Monier-Williams, "Brâhmanism and Hinduism," 301; Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 329.
[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 15.

a crow are a specific against old age, but the cawing of a crow is ominous at the beginning of a journey. If a crow hops and caws on the roof a guest may be expected. Musalmâns have both fear and respect for the crow, because it was he showed Caiṇ how to bury Abel.

## THE HAND OF GLORY.

It is a common belief in Europe that the Hand of Glory, or the dried-up hand of a criminal who has been executed, is a powerful charm for thieves. In Ireland, "if a candle is placed in a dead hand, neither wind nor water can extinguish it, and if carried into a house, the inmates will sleep the sleep of the dead as long as it remains under the roof, and no power on earth can wake them as long as the dead hand holds the candle." The hand of a dead man is also used to stir the milk when butter will not form.[1] So, in Northern India, thieves have a superstition that the ashes of a corpse will, if sprinkled by the door of a house, prevent the inmates from awaking during the commission of a burglary. The Hand of Glory, according to Sir G. Cox, is "the light flashing from the dim and dusky storm-cloud,"[2] but this can hardly, with the utmost ingenuity, be invoked to explain the similar usage of Indian burglars, who carry about with them the stick out of a crow's nest, the Gad kî Lakrî, which opens locks and holds the household spell-bound. The Indian thief, like his English brother, by the way, often carries about a piece of charcoal as a charm in his operations.

## THE FOWL.

Among some of the Indian races the value set on the fowl may possibly, as Mr. Campbell suggests, depend on the feeling that the spirits of the dead wandering near their

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 81 sq., 172; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 24; Brand, "Observations," 732; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 239 sq.; Aubrey, "Remaines," 197; "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 215.

[2] "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," ii. 219 sq.

ancient homes find an asylum in the domestic fowls.[1] At any rate, as a sacrifice, the black fowl is very generally preferred. This is so among the Drâvidian races of Central India. In Ireland the first egg laid by a little black hen, eaten the very first thing in the morning, will keep you from fever for the year.[2] In Germany it was held that to find treasure, that is to say, to scare the fiends which guard and hide it, one should use a black he-goat and a black fowl.[3]

One of the Italian charms directs, "To bewitch one till he die, take a black hen and pluck from it every feather; and this done, keep them all carefully, so that not one be lost. With these you may do any harm to grown-up people or children."[4] Another possible reason for the respect paid to the fowl is that the corn spirit is often killed in the form of a cock to promote the periodical vegetation of the crops.

## THE DOVE AND PIGEON.

The dove is held in much respect by Musalmâns. "Among the Northern Semites the dove is sacred to Ashtoreth and has all the marks of a totem, for the Syrians would not eat it. It was not merely a symbol, but received divine honour. In Arabia we find a dove idol in the Qaaba, and sacred doves surround it."[5] So, the Kheshgi Pathâns of Qasûr in the Panjâb will not kill pigeons; they are similarly protected by Hindus at Bharatpur, and among Muhammadans they rank as the Sayyid among birds. In Northern India a house with pigeons is supposed to be safe from ghosts. The dove is believed to utter a peculiar note four times in succession, in which she bewails her neglected lōver. She says,—

*Pisûn thî, kâtûn thî:*
*Ayâ thâ, chalâ gayâ.*

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[1] "Notes," 264.
[2] "Folk-lore," iv. 350.
[3] Grimm, "Teutonic Mythology," iii. 977.
[4] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 354.
[5] Robertson-Smith, "Kinship," 196 sq.

"While I was grinding flour and spinning, he came and departed."[1]

## THE GOOSE OR SWAN.

The goose or swan is possibly an illustration of what may be a tribal totem. It is said in the Bhâgavata Purâna that at one time there existed one Veda, one god Agni, and one caste. This we learn from the commentator was in the Krita age, and the one caste he tells us of was named Hansa or Swan. The Hansas are, again, in the Vishnu Purâna, said to be one of four castes or tribes existing in a district exterior to India, and finally we learn from the Linga Purâna that Hansa was a name of Brahma himself. It is reasonable to suppose that we have a swan tribe in the Indian Hansas.[2] As an argument in favour of the theory that the Hansa was a tribal totem, we find that the Kalhans Râjputs of Oudh are said to take their name from the Kâla Hansa or Black Swan; that Râjputs nowadays will not eat it; and that the same respect is shown to a bird of allied type, the Brâhmani Duck, and its mate, the Chakwa, Chakwi of our rivers. They were once two lovers, separated by fate, changed into ducks, and all through the night they call sadly to each other across the broad stream of the Ganges, which keeps them apart.

To the Hansa is ascribed the fabulous power of being able to separate milk from water after the two have been mixed together.[3] In England the goose is supposed to have some uncanny way of predicting weather.[4] In Welsh belief the wild goose is a witch, especially if first seen on the first Thursday night of the lunar month.[5] The ancient Greeks ascribed to the swan the gift of prophecy and song; the sacred geese of the capital were respected at Rome, and the ancient Germans considered it a prophetic bird. The

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 12, 42, 60; ii. 29; iii. 161; Grimm, "Household Tales, i. 367; ii. 428, 573.
[2] McLennan, "Fortnightly Review," vi. 582.
[3] Knowles, "Kashmîr Folk-tales," 449.
[4] Brand, "Observations," 699.
[5] Rhys, "Lectures," 175.

goose was a favourite Buddhist emblem, and a flock of them is depicted on the Lion Pillar at Betiya in Tirhût.[1]

In the story of Nala and Damayantî, a flock of these birds arranges the interviews between the lovers, and in the Mahâbhârata the Rishis take the form of a swan to convey the divine message. According to the comparative mythologists, it is needless to say, the Hansa is the sun.[2]

## SUNDRY SACRED BIRDS.

Mention has already been made of Garuda, half man, half bird, the vehicle of Vishnu. He is the son of one of the daughters of Daksha, whom we have already met with in connection with the moon, and the sage Kasyapa. According to the Mahâbhârata, he was given leave to devour wicked men, but not to touch a Brâhman. Once he did devour a Brâhman, but the holy man so burnt his throat that he was glad to disgorge him. In the Râmâyana we meet with Jatâyu, who is said to be a son of Garuda and king of the vultures. He tried to stop the chariot in which Râvana was abducting Sîtâ, and though wounded, was able to carry the news to Râma.

A bird known as the Malahâri or "filth destroyer" is a sort of totem of the Kanjar gipsies. If they see it singing on a green branch to the front or right, it is an auspicious omen, and they start at once on the prowl.

So with the Khanjarît, in Sanskrit Khanjanâkriti, the wagtail, which is also known as Râm Chiraiya or "the bird of Râma." It is associated with Vishnu, because the marks on its throat are said to resemble the Sâlagrâma. It comes from the heaven of Râma in the end of the rains, and remains till the close of spring, and then bears back to Râma a report of the state of the world and the crops. When it first appears every one bows to it. A Sanskrit text lays down that when a person first sees the bird, if he be standing near a Brâhman, or near water, or sitting on an elephant, or at

[1] Ferguson, "History of Indian Architecture," 54; Tennent, "Ceylon," i. 484.

[2] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 307 sqq.

daybreak, or when the bird is flying near or sitting on a serpent, it is considered propitious. When a person first sees it in the east, it brings him good luck all through the year; when seen in the south-east, it predicts loss by fire; to the south-west, fighting; to the west, acquisition of wealth; if seen to the north-east, the observer will gain good clothes and jewels. He who sees it in the north-west will die. The superstitions in Europe connected with the magpie and cuckoo are of much the same class. In Ireland it is said, "Beware of killing the water wagtail, for it has three drops of the Devil's blood in its little body, and ill-luck ever goes with it and follows it."[1]

The Ojhiyâls or wizards of the Central Provinces sell the skins of a species of Buceros, called Dhanchirya, which are used to hang up in the house to secure wealth (*dhan*), whence its name; and thigh bones of the same bird are hung round the wrists of children as a charm against evil spirits.[2]

## THE HOOPOE.

The legend of the hoopoe is thus told by Arrian: "To the king of the Indians was born a son. The child had elder brothers, who, when they came to man's estate, turned out to be very unjust and the greatest of reprobates. They despised their brother because he was the youngest; and they scoffed at their father and their mother, whom they despised because they were old and grey-headed. The boy, accordingly, and his aged parents could no longer live with these wicked men, and away they fled from home, all three together. In the course of the protracted journeys which they had then to undergo, the old people succumbed to fatigue and died, and the boy showed them no light regard, but buried them in himself, having cut off his head with a sword. Then, as the Brachmanes (Brâhman) tell us, the all-seeing sun, in admiration of this surprising act of piety, transformed the boy into a bird, which is most beautiful to behold, and which lives to a very advanced age. So on his head there

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 177.

[2] Hislop, "Papers," 6.

grew up a crest, which was, as it were, a memorial of what he had done in the time of his flight."[1]

Somadeva gives another story of this bird. Rajatadanshtra one day saw his sister Somaprabhâ playing on a Pinjara, and when she would not give it to him, took the form of a bird and flew away with it to heaven. She cursed him that he should become a bird with a golden crest, but promised that when in his bird shape he should fall into a blind well, "and a merciful person draws you out, and you do him a service in return, you shall be released from this curse."[2]

The Muhammadan tradition is that the Hudhud, or hoopoe, had the power of finding water which the devils have buried under the earth, and she assisted Solomon to find water for ablution, and helped him to find Bilqîs, the queen of Sheba. In Sweden the appearance of the hoopoe is looked on as an omen of war.[3]

## THE WOODPECKER.

So of the woodpecker, which is said to have been a Râja in a former birth, and still to retain his royal crest. In Italian tradition the woodpecker (*Picus Martis*) is a digger in forests, where he lives alone and digs and hews, and knows all hidden secrets and treasures.[4] In India the Titihrî, or sandpiper, is said to sleep with his legs in the air and thus supports the firmament.

## THE PEACOCK.

The peacock is, of course, a sacred bird. He is specially venerated by the Jâts, who strongly object to seeing the bird killed near their villages. A bunch of the feathers is waved over the sick to scare the demon of disease. As we have already seen, it is a charm against snake-bite to smoke one of its feathers in a pipe. In Europe the loud calling of the bird presages a death.

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 178.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 105.
[3] Brand, "Observations," 701.
[4] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 272.

### THE PHEASANT.

Once upon a time the Monâl pheasant of the Hills and the Kalchuniya had a dispute as to when the sun arose. The Monâl woke first and then walked between the legs of the other, who was so injured that he has never been able to do anything but skip ever since.

### THE KITE.

Young kites do not open their eyes till they are shown a bit of gold. The best cure for weak eyes is to apply to them antimony mixed with the yolk of a kite's egg, a good instance of sympathetic magic, because the kite is the most long-sighted of birds. When sweepers suffer from rheumatic pains, they kill a kite on Tuesday, cut up the bones, and tie them to the affected part, which brings about an immediate cure.[1]

### THE PARTRIDGE.

The partridge and the peacock once contended in dancing, and when the turn of the partridge came he borrowed the pretty feet of the peacock, which he has never returned since. Râja Nala, at one period of his life, came under the malignant influence of Sani or Saturn and lost all he possessed in the world. At last, as he was starving, he managed to catch a black partridge and set about roasting it. But the ill-luck of the evil planet asserted itself and the dead bird came to life and flew away. The result is the black marks of charring which still remain upon its body. Now it cries in the words, *Subhân terî qudrat*—"Great is the power of the Almighty," because it was saved from the fire.

### THE PARROT.

Last among sacred birds comes the parrot. Of course, according to Professor De Gubernatis and his school, he

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 81; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 162.

represents the sun.[1] The bird appears constantly in the folk-tales as gifted with the power of speaking and possessed of wisdom. The wife of the sage Kasyapa was, according to the Vishnu Purâna, the mother of all the parrots. In the folk-tales we have the parrot who knows the four Vedas, who is like the falcon in the Squire's tale of Chaucer.[2] In others he warns the hero of fortune, befriends the heroine, and is the companion of Râja Rasâlu.[3] The talking parrot constantly warns the deceived husband. The bird seems to have been a sort of marriage totem among the Drâvidian races, for images of it made of the wood of the cotton tree or of clay are hung up in the marriage shed among the Kols and lower castes in the North-Western Provinces.

## THE ALLIGATOR.

The alligator and crocodile are revered because of their habit of killing human beings. Writing of South Africa, Mr. Macdonald says: "To the Bathlapin the crocodile is sacred, and by all it is revered, but rather under the form of fear than of affection. I have often thought that the 'river calling' of South Africa, where there are no crocodiles, is the survival of an ancient recollection of the time when the ancestors of the present Kaffirs dwelt on the margins of rivers infested by these murderous brutes, and where they often saw their women drawn underneath when going to the river to fetch water."[4] The crocodile may thus be the type of many of the Indian water demons to whom reference has been already made. Hence, it is a general rule among savages to spare crocodiles, or rather only to kill them in obedience to the law of blood feud, that is, as a retaliation for the slaughter of men by crocodiles. In India it became a favourite form of religious suicide to be devoured by the crocodiles at Gangasâgar. Makara, a sort of marine monster,

[1] "Zoological Mythology," i. 375.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 18.
[3] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 139, 205, 255 sqq.
[4] "Folk-lore," iii. 342.

half crocodile and half shark, is the vehicle of Kâmadeva, the god of love, and Gangâ Mâî îs depicted as riding on an alligator. They are sometimes put into tanks and worshipped, and fishermen have a tradition that, if duly appeased, they never attack them.[1]

## FISH.

Fish are in many places regarded as sacred. The salmon of knowledge appears in the Celtic folk-lore.[2] The sacred speckled trout are found in many Irish wells, and the same idea prevails in many parts of Europe.[3] We find the fish figuring in the Hindu myth of the Creation. Manu, while he was bathing, found a fish in the water, which said, "I will save thee from the flood which shall destroy the world." The fish grew and was about to go to the ocean, when he directed Manu to build a boat. When the deluge came, the fish dragged the boat by his horn to a place of safety. The myth appears in other forms, more or less akin to the Hebrew story based on Babylonian tradition.

There are many places in India where fish are protected, such as those at Kota and in the Mahânadî river, the Betwa at Bhilsa, Hardwâr, Mathura, Mirzapur, Benares, Nepâl, and in Afghanistân.[4] In the Sâraswata pool in the Himâlaya lived the sacred fish called Mrikunda; they are fed on the fourteenth of the light half of each month, and oblations are offered for the repose of the Manes of deceased relations.[5] It is a common custom among pious Hindus to feed fish at sacred places with a lâkh or more of little balls of flour wrapped up in Bhojpatra or birch bark or paper with the name of Râma written upon it. Their eating the name of the deity ensures their salvation, and thus confers religious merit on the giver. The fish is the vehicle of Khwâja Khizr, the water god, and hence has become a sort of totem of the Shiah Musalmâns and the crest of the late royal family of

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 4, 38.
[2] Rhys, "Lectures," 553. [3] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 238 sq.
[4] Rousselet, "India and its Native Princes," 402; "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 76; ii. 57, 93; iii. 130.
[5] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 380, 775.

Oudh. Pictures of fish are constantly drawn on the walls of houses as a charm against demoniacal influence.

## THE FISH IN FOLK-LORE.

The fish constantly appears in the folk-tales. We have in Somadeva the fish that laughed when it was dead; the fish that swallows the hero or heroine or a boat.[1] In one of the Kashmîr tales we have the fish swallowing the ring, which is like the tale which Herodotus tells of Polycrates. In another we have the Oriental version of the story of Jonah, where the merchant is found by the potter in the belly of the fish.[2] So, Pradyumna, son of Krishna and Rukminî, was thrown into the ocean by the demon Sambara, and recovered from the belly of a fish by his wife Mâyâ Devî. In many of the modern tales the fish takes the form of the Life Index. The king Bhartari, the brother of the celebrated Râja Vikramaditya, who is now a godling and spends part of the day at Benares and part at the Chunâr Fort, had a fish, "the digestion of which gave him knowledge of all that occurred in the three worlds." By a divine curse the nymph Adrikâ was transformed into a fish which lived in the Jumnâ. Here she conceived by the king Uparichara, was caught by a fisherman, taken to the king and opened, when she regained her heavenly form, and from her were produced Matsya, the male, and Matsyâ, the female fish, the progenitors of the finny race. The fish often plays a part in the miraculous conception myths, as in the Mahâbhârata we read of a fish which devours the seed, and a girl having eaten it brings forth a child. The fish incarnation of Vishnu possibly represents the adoption of a fish totem into Brâhmanism. It is needless to say that the legendary fish has been identified with the sun by the school of comparative mythologists.[3]

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 24, 207; ii. 599.
[2] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 27, 158.
[3] Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," i. 292, note; ii. 25 sq.

## THE EEL.

The eel is a totem of the Mundâri Kols of Bengal and of the Orâons, neither of whom will eat it. In Northern England an eel skin tied round the leg is a cure for cramp. Eel fat, in the European tales, is used as a magic ointment, and gives the power of seeing the fairies.[1]

## THE TORTOISE.

The tortoise, again, is sacred. Vishnu appeared as a tortoise in the Satya Yuga or first age to recover some things of value which had been lost in the deluge. In the form of a tortoise he placed himself at the bottom of the sea of milk, and made his back the basis on which the gods and demons, using the serpent Vâsuki as a rope, churned the ocean by means of the mount Mandara. The Ganrâr, a tribe of Bengal fishermen, make sacrifices of the river tortoise to the goddess Kolokumârî, the daughter of the deep; this is the only sacrifice she will accept, and she brings sickness on those who fail to make this offering.[2] The tortoise is a totem of the Mundâri Kols, and the Kharwârs and Mânjhis of Mirzapur worship clay images of it, which they keep in their house, because on one occasion it conveyed their first ancestor across a river in flood.

The Gonds have a similar tradition that the tortoise saved their ancestor Lingo from the clutches of the alligator. The tortoise is also a helper in one of the German tales.[3] In one of Somadeva's stories, the tortoise is sacrificed by a Brâhman to the Manes of his father.[4]

## THE FROG.

The frog, again, is invested with mystical powers. The

[1] Hartland, "Science of Fairy Tales," 65.
[2] Buchanan, "Eastern India," iii. 532.
[3] Grimm, "Household Tales," ii. 407.
[4] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 271.

monstrous toad of Berkeley Castle is said to be really a seal.[1]

In English folk-lore it is associated with witches, and wears a precious jewel in its head. Hindus believe that the female frog is the spirit of Mandodarî, the wife of Râvana. It is a common belief that the fat of the frog forms a magic ointment which enables witches to fly through the air.[2] According to a Scotch Saga, the middle piece of a white snake roasted by the fire gives a knowledge of supernatural things to anyone who shall put his finger in the fat which drops from it. According to one of the Indian legends, Agni, the fire god, took refuge in the water to escape the gods, but the frogs, suffering from the heat, informed the gods, and the angry deity cursed them that their speech should henceforth be inarticulate. The frog by his voice announces the coming of rain; hence when rain holds off it is a common charm to pour water over a frog, another instance of sympathetic magic.

## INSECTS.

Even insects are in some cases regarded with veneration. In Cornwall, the ants are "the small people" in their state of decay from off the earth; it is deemed most unlucky to destroy a colony of ants.[3]

The ant-hill is, as we have seen, used as an altar by some of the Drâvidian tribes, and on it they take their oaths. Hence ants are carefully fed on certain days by both Hindus and Jainas, and are regarded as in some way connected with the souls of the sainted dead. We have in many of the folk-tales the ant as a helper.

So, in many parts of the Panjâb, the many-coloured grasshopper, which feeds on the leaves of the Madâr or great ‚swallow wort, is called Râmjî-kî-gâê or "Râma's cow," which reminds us of the respect paid by English

[1] "Gloucestershire Folk-lore," 9.
[2] Tawney, *loc. cit.*, ii. 594; Grimm, *loc. cit.*, i. 357.
[3] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 130.

children to the ladybird insect.[1] So, the Greeks and Romans called the Cicada Mantis or "the soothsayer," and it is often delineated on their tombs as a charm against evil. Mystic powers of the same kind are attributed to the spider, and to Daddy Longlegs in our nurseries.

The souls of the dead are believed to enter into flies and bees. Hence in parts of Great Britain news of a death in a family is whispered into the beehive.[2] In one of Somadeva's tales we find the monkeys trying to warm themselves over a firefly, which is gifted with various miraculous powers.[3] A fly falling into an inkstand is a lucky omen. In the Râmâyana Hanumân metamorphoses himself into a fly to reach Sîtâ, and there are many instances of this in the tales.

Lastly, comes the Tassar silkworm. In Mirzapur, when the seed of the silkworm is brought to the house, the Kol or Bhuiyâr puts it in a place which has been carefully plastered with cowdung to bring good luck. From that time the owner must be careful to avoid ceremonial impurity; he must give up cohabitation with his wife, he must not sleep on a bed, he must not shave nor have his nails cut, nor anoint himself with oil, nor eat food cooked with butter, nor tell lies, nor do anything opposed to his simple code of morality. He vows to Singârmatî Devî that if the worms are duly born he will make her an offering. When the cocoons open and the worms appear, he collects the women of his house and they sing the usual song as at the birth of a baby into the family, and some red lead is smeared on the parting of the hair of all the married women of the neighbourhood. He feeds his clansmen, and duly makes the promised offering to Singârmatî Devî. When the worms pair, the rejoicings are made as at a marriage.

In Bengal, in addition to these precautions, the women, apparently through fear of sexual pollution, are carefully excluded from the silkworm shed.[4] We have the same idea

[1] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 8.
[2] Brand, "Observations," 685.
[3] "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 39.
[4] Buchanan, "Eastern India," ii. 157.

in the Western Isles of Scotland, where they send a man very early on the morning of the first of May to prevent any woman from crossing, for that, they say, would prevent the salmon from coming into the river all the year round.[1]

[1] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 270.

# CHAPTER V.



Simulacraque cerea figit
Et miserum tenues in jecur urget acus.
*Ovid*, Heroides, vi. 91, 92.

FROM the Baiga or Ojha, who by means of his grain sieve fetish identifies the particular evil spirit by which his patient is afflicted, we come to the regular witch or wizard. He works in India by means and appliances which can be readily paralleled by the procedure of his brethren in Western countries.[1]

## THE WITCH.

The position of the witch has been so clearly stated by Sir A. Lyall, that his remarks deserve quotation. "The peculiarity of the witch is that he does everything without the help of the gods. It begins when a savage stumbles on a few natural effects out of the common run of things, which he finds himself able to work by unvarying rule of thumb. He becomes a fetish to himself. Fetishism is the adoration of a visible object supposed to possess active power. A witch is one who professes to work marvels, not through the aid or counsel of the supernatural beings in whom he believes as much as the rest, but by certain occult faculties which he conceives himself to possess. There is a real distinction even in fetishism between the witch and the

[1] For the European witch, consult among other authorities Scott, "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," *passim;* Chambers, "Book of Days," i. 356 sq.; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 69 sq.; Conway, "Demonology," ii. 317, 327; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 245 sq.

brother practitioner on a fetish, or between the witch and the Shaman, who rolls about the ground and screams out his oracles; and this line, between adoration and inspiration, vows and oracles on the one side, and thaumaturgy by occult, incomprehensible arts on the other, divides the two professions from bottom to top. Hence, the witch, and not the man who works through the fetish, is proscribed. Hence any disappointment in the aid which the aboriginal tribes are entitled to expect from their gods to avoid averting disease or famine, throws the people on the scent of witchcraft."[1]

Again, "The most primitive witchcraft looks very like medicine in the embryonic state; but as no one will give the aboriginal physician any credit for cures or chemical effects produced by simple human knowledge, he is soon forced back into occult and mystic devices, which belong neither to religion nor to destiny, but are a ridiculous mixture of both; whence the ordinary kind of witchcraft is generated."

And he goes on to show how "the great plagues, cholera and the small-pox, belong to the gods; but a man cannot expect a great incarnation of Vishnu to cure his cow, or find his lost purse; nor will public opinion tolerate his going to any respectable shrine with a petition that his neighbour's wife, his ox, or his ass may be smitten with some sore disease." This, however, must be taken with the correction that, as we have seen already, the deities which rule disease are of a much lower grade than the divine cabinet which rules the world. The main difference then between the hedge priest and the witch is, as Sir A. Lyall shows, that the former serves his god or devil, whereas the latter makes the familiar demon, if one is kept, serve him.

## WITCHCRAFT: HOW DEVELOPED.

The belief in witchcraft is general among the lower and less advanced Indian races. Colonel Dalton's assertion that

[1] "Asiatic Studies," 79 sqq., 89 sqq.

the Juângs, who were quite recently in the stage of wearing leaf aprons, do not believe in witchcraft or sorcery, must be accepted with great caution. It is quite certain that all the allied Drâvidian races, even those at a somewhat higher state of culture than the Juângs, such as Kols, Kharwârs, and Cheros, firmly believe in witchcraft. But all these people observe the most extreme reticence on the subject. If you ask a Mirzapur Hill-man if there are any witches in his neighbourhood, he will look round furtively and suspiciously, and even if he admits that he has heard of such people, he will be very reluctant to give much information about them.

A belief in witchcraft is, then, primarily the heritage of the more isolated and least advanced races, like the Kols and Bhîls, Santâls and Thârus. In fact, whatever may be the ethnical origin of the theory, it is at present in Northern India almost specialized among the Drâvidian, or aboriginal peoples. It also widely prevails among those who lead a nomadic life and are thus brought more directly in contact with nature in her wilder and sterner moods, such as the Nat and the Kanjar, the Hâbûra and the Sânsiya. So, in Europe sorcery and fortune-telling, the charming of disease, the making of love philters, and so on are the function of the Romani; and Mr. Leland hazards the supposition that Herodias was a gipsy.[1]

The belief that a certain person is a witch is probably generated in various ways. Many a one becomes reputed as a witch from the realization of some unlucky prophecy, or the fulfilment of some casual, passionate curse or imprecation upon an enemy or rival. The old Scottish rhymes exactly express this feeling:—

There dwelt a weaver in Moffat toun,
That said the minister would die sune;
The minister died, and the fouk o' the toun
They brant the weaver wi' the wadd o' the lume,
And ca'd it weel-waned on the warloch loon.[2]

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[1] "Etruscan Roman Remains," 155.
[2] Chambers, "Popular Rhymes of Scotland," 23.

With this is intimately connected the belief in the Evil Eye, and that certain persons have the power of calling down on their enemies the influence of evil spirits; and, as in Western lands, such a power is often attributed to persons afflicted with ugliness, deformity, crankiness of temper, liability to sudden fits of passion, epilepsy, and the like. Disease or death, famine, accident, or any form of trouble, never, in popular belief, come naturally. There is always behind calamity some malignant power which selects the victim, and the attribution of this faculty to any one naturally regarded as uncanny, or who practises rites or worship strange to orthodox belief, is in the opinion of the rustic only reasonable.

## THE JIGAR KHOR.

One particularly dreaded form of witch is the Jigar Khor or liver-eater, of whom Abul Fazl gives a description: "One of this class can steal away the liver of another by looks and incantations. Other accounts say that by looking at a person he deprives him of his senses, and then steals from him something resembling the seed of a pomegranate, which he hides in the calf of his leg; after being swelled by the fire, he distributes it among his fellows to be eaten, which ceremony concludes the life of the fascinated person. A Jigar Khor is able to communicate his art to another by teaching him incantations, and by making him eat a bit of the liver cake. These Jigar Khors are mostly women. It is said they can bring intelligence from a long distance in a short space of time, and if they are thrown into a river with a stone tied to them, they nevertheless will not sink. In order to deprive any one of this wicked power, they brand his temples and every joint of his body, cram his eyes with salt, suspend him for forty days in a subterraneous chamber, and repeat over him certain incantations."

Of the modern Jigar Khors of the Panjâb we are told that when a witch succeeds in taking out a man's liver, she will not eat it for two and a half days. If after eating it she is

put under the influence of an exorciser, she can be forced to take the liver of some animal and put it back to replace that taken from the original victim.[1] In one of the tales of Somadeva the wicked wife of the barber is a witch, and when he is asleep she takes out his entrails and sucks them, and then replaces them as before.[2]

## THE WITCH IN FOLK-LORE.

We have already learned to look to the folk-tales for the most trustworthy indications of popular belief, and here the dark shadow of witchcraft overclouds much of their delicate fancy. Here we find the witch taking many forms—of an old woman in trouble, of a white hind with golden horns, of a queen. Others, like the archwitch Kâlarâtrî or "black night," are of repulsive appearance; she has dull eyes, a depressed, flat nose. Her eyebrows, like those of the were-wolves or vampires of Slavonia,[3] meet together; she has large cheeks, widely parted lips, projecting teeth, a long neck, pendulous breasts, a large belly, and broad, expanded feet. "She appears as if the Creator had made a specimen of his skill in producing ugliness." Like the Jigar Khor she obtains her powers by eating human flesh, or like modern witches, who claim to possess the Dâyan kâ Mantra or Dâkinî's spell, by which she can tear out the heart of her victim.

The powers of such witches are innumerable. They can find anything on earth, can open or patch up the sky, possess second sight, can restore the dead to life, can set fire to water, can turn stones into wax, can separate lovers, can metamorphose the hero into any shape they please. They control the weather and cause storms and tempests. If they follow one they hate and measure his footsteps in the dust, he at once becomes lame.[4]

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 14.
[2] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," i. 289.
[3] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 176; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 375.
[4] Temple, "Wideawake Stories," 395; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 157, 159, 289, 340; ii. 164, 240; Brand, "Observations," 589; Rhys, "Lectures," 199; Hunt, "Popular Romances," 327.

They carry on their unholy revels in cemeteries and cremation grounds. They meet under the leadership of the dreaded Bhairava, as German witches assemble on the Blocksberg. So Diana Herodias leads the Italian witches who meet at the walnut tree of Benevento, as those of Cornwall collect at Trewa.[1]

Many witches obtain power over the fever demon. She fastens a string round the hero's neck, and by a spell turns him into an ape. She often kills a child, and the heroine, like Genoveva, is falsely accused, and expelled from her home, until the plot is discovered and she is restored to her husband's love. Lastly, we have the conflict between the powers of good and evil, the benevolent and malignant witch, which forms one of the stock incidents of the European folk-tales.[2] The malignant, liver-eating witch is naturally associated with the tomb-haunting badger. One of them appeared quite recently at Ahmadâbâd, and being supposed to carry off children in the disguise of a badger, was called Adam Khor, or the devourer of the sons of men.[3]

## INSTRUCTION IN WITCHCRAFT.

Writing of Italy, Mr. Leland says:[4]—"Among the priestesses of the hidden spell, an elder dame has usually in hand some younger girl, whom she instructs, firstly, in the art of bewitching or injuring enemies, and secondly, in the more important processes of annulling or unbinding the spells of others, or causing mutual love or conferring luck."

So, among the Agariyas of Bengal, there are old women, professors of witchcraft, who stealthily instruct the young girls. "The latter are all eager to be taught, and are not considered proficient till a fine forest tree selected to be experimented on is destroyed by the potency of their charms; so that the wife a man takes to his bosom has

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 150; Hunt, *loc. cit.*, 328.
[2] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 395; Tawney, *loc. cit.*, i. 313.
[3] "Bombay Gazetteer," iv. 27; Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," iii. 13.
[4] *Loc. cit.*, 3.

probably *done* her tree, and is confident in the belief that she can, if she pleases, dispose of her husband in the same manner, if he makes himself obnoxious."[1]

So, in Bombay, when a Guru, or teacher, wishes to initiate a candidate into the mysteries of the Black Art, he directs the candidate to watch a favourable opportunity for the commencement of the study, the opportunity being the death of a woman in childbirth. As soon as this event takes place, the candidate is instructed what to do. He watches the procession as the dead is being taken to the burning or burial ground, and takes care to see who the bearers are. He then takes a small tin box in his hand, and picking up a pinch of the earth out of the hind footsteps of the two rear bearers, he keeps the earth in the tin box. Then he watches where the dead body is being burnt, and goes home.

"Next day he goes to the spot, and taking a little of the ashes of the corpse, puts it in the tin box. Subsequently, on a suitable day, that is on a new moon or on an eclipse day, he goes to the burning ground at midnight, and taking off his clothes, he sits on the ground, and placing the tin box in front of him, lights a little incense, and repeats the incantations taught to him by his guru or teacher. When he has practised the repetition of the incantations, the spirit Hadal becomes subject to his control, and by her help he becomes able to annoy any one he pleases.

"Among the troubles which the witch or magician brings upon his enemies, the following are said to be the most common in the Dakkhin as well as in the Konkan. The witch causes star-shaped or cross-like marks of marking-nuts on the body of the person she has a grudge against. The peculiarity of these marks is that they appear in numbers in different parts of the body, and as suddenly disappear. The other troubles are the drying-up of the milk of milch cattle, or turning the milk into blood; stopping or retarding the growth of the fœtus in cattle, and turning them into moles; stealing grain or other field

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 323.

produce from the farm-yards of the victim; letting loose wolves, jackals, or rats into the victim's field; pricking needles or thorns into the victim's eyes or body; applying turmeric to the eyes of a female victim, or putting lamp-black into her eyes; or tearing the open end of her robe; and causing death to an enemy by means of a method of the Black Art, called Mûth, literally 'a handful.'

"The Mûth generally consists of a handful of rice or Urad pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) charmed and sent by the witch against her enemy through the agency of the familiar spirit. It is likened to a shock of electricity sudden and sharp, which strikes in the centre of the heart, causes vomiting and spitting of blood, and may, if not warded against, end in the death of the victim. Practised experts pretend to see the Mûth rolling through the air, like a red-hot ball, and say that they can avert its evil consequences in two ways—either by satiating it, which is done so as to cause a little bleeding, and allowing the blood to drop on a charmed lemon, which is afterwards cut and thrown into a river; or by reversing its action and sending it back to the person who issued it, which is done by charging a lemon and throwing it in the direction whence the Mûth has been seen to come. The operation of a Mûth is most dreaded in many parts of Bombay, and especially in the Konkan. Cases of sudden illness, blood vomiting, or sudden death are frequently attributed to the agency of a Mûth or charmed handful of rice or pulse sent by an enemy."[1]

We have here examples of the dread of the woman dying at her confinement, which we have already noticed in the case of the Churel, and the nudity charm is also familiar.

## WITCH SEASONS.

In Central India, witches are supposed, by the aid of their familiars, who are known as Bîr, or "the hero," to inflict pain, disease, and death upon human beings. Their power of witchcraft, like that of all Indian witches, exists on the

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 203 sq.

fourteenth, fifteenth, and twenty-ninth of each month, and in particular at the Diwâlî or feast of lamps, and the Naurâtrî or nine days devoted to the worship of Durgâ.

In the same way the Irish witches flit on November Eve, and "on that night mortal people should keep at home, or they will suffer for it; for souls of the dead have power over all things on that night of the year, and they hold a festival with the fairies, and drink red wine from the fairy cups and dance to fairy music till the moon goes down."[1] Of the Allhallows demon Professor Rhys writes: "This night was the Saturnalia of all that was hideous and uncanny in the world of spirits. It had been fixed as the time of all others when the Sun god, whose power had been gradually falling off since the great feast associated with him on the first of August, succumbed to his enemies, the powers of darkness and of winter. It was their first hour of triumph after an interval of subjection, and the popular imagination pictured them stalking abroad with more than ordinary insolence and aggressiveness."[2]

At other times the Indian witches appear, dress, talk, and eat like other women, but "when the fit is on them, they are sometimes seen with their eyes glaring red, their hair dishevelled and bristled, while their heads are often turned round in a strange, convulsive manner. On the nights of those days, they are believed to go abroad, and after casting off their garments, to ride about on tigers and other wild animals; and if they desire to go on the water, alligators come like the beasts of the forests at their call, and they disport in rivers and lakes upon their backs till dawn of day, about which period they always return home, and resume their usual forms and occupations."[3]

## WITCHES TAKING THE FORM OF TIGERS.

The idea that witches take the form of tigers is widespread. Colonel Dalton describes how a Kol, tried for the murder of

[1] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 78. [2] "Lectures," 516 sq.
[3] Malcolm, "Central India," ii. 212.

a wizard, stated in his defence that his wife having been killed by a tiger in his presence, he stealthily followed the animal as it glided away after gratifying its appetite, and saw that it entered the house of one Pûsa, a Kol, whom he knew. He called out Pûsa's relations, and when they heard the story, they not only credited it, but declared that they had long suspected Pûsa of possessing such power; on entering they found him, and not a tiger; they delivered him bound to the hands of his accuser, who at once killed him. In explanation of their proceedings, they deposed that Pûsa had one night devoured an entire goat, and roared like a tiger while he was eating it; and on another occasion he had informed his friends that he felt a longing for a particular bullock, and that very night the bullock was carried off by a tiger.[1]

Mr. Campbell gives a very similar story from Bombay, in which a man-eating tiger was supposed to be a witch in disguise.[2] All these stories very closely resemble the European were-wolf and similar legends.[3] In Mirzapur they tell a tale of one of the Drâvidian Bhuiyârs, whose wife went recently on the Pura Mamuâr Hill, when an evil spirit in the form of a tiger attacked and killed her. This was after her death ascertained to be the case by the inquiries of the village Baiga, who now does an annual ceremony and sacrifice near the place. For such witch tigers the favourite remedy is to knock out their teeth to prevent their doing any more mischief and becoming the Indian equivalent of the Loupgarou.[4]

## WITCHES EXTRACTING SUBSTANCES FROM THEIR VICTIMS.

Another remedy is thus described by Abul Fazl: "The sorceress casts something out of her mouth like the grain of a pomegranate, which is believed to be part of the heart which she has eaten. The patient picks it up as part of his

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 290. [2] "Notes," 257 sq.
[3] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 312 sqq.; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 201 sq.
[4] Balfour, "Cyclopædia," i. 961; Lyall, "Asiatic Studies," 85; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 7.

own intestine and greedily swallows it. By this means, as if his heart was replaced in his body, he recovers his health by degrees."

The idea that witches extract substances out of a sick person's body is very common.[1] The witch in Macbeth says, "I will drain him dry as hay." In the same way the original object of kissing is said to be to extract an evil spirit out of a person. Many people get a holy man to kiss a sick child and blow over some water which is given it to drink, and thus the evil spirit is removed.

General Sleeman gives the case of a trooper who had taken some milk from an old woman without payment, and was seized with severe internal pains, which he attributed to her witchcraft. She was sent for, but denied having bewitched him. She admitted, however, that "the household gods may have punished him for his wickedness." She was ordered to cure him, and set about collecting materials for the purpose, but meanwhile the pains left him.

Another man took a cock from an old Gond woman and was similarly affected. "The old cock was actually heard crowing in his belly." In spite of all the usual remedies he died, and the cock never ceased crowing at intervals till his death.

He tells of another witch who was known to be such by the juice of the sugar-cane she was eating turning into blood. A man saw her staring at him and left the district at once. "It is well known that these spells and curses can only reach a distance of ten or twelve miles, and if you offend one of these witches, the sooner you put that distance between you and them, the better."

Another witch was bargaining with a man for some sugar-cane. She seized one end of the stalk and the purchaser the other. A scuffle ensued, and a soldier came up and cut the cane in two with a sword. Immediately a quantity of blood flowed from the cane to the ground, which the witch had been drawing through it from the man's body. So we read of the two witches in the Italian tale, who "seeing

[1] Tylor, "Early History," 276.

that he would not go, cast him by their witchcraft into a deep sleep, and with a small tube sucked all his blood from his veins, and made it into a blood pudding which they carried with them. And this gave them the power to be invisible till they should return."[1]

"It is the general belief that there is not a village or a single family without its witch in this part of the country. Indeed, no one will give his daughter in marriage to a family without one, saying, 'If my daughter has children, what will become of them without a witch to protect them from witches of other families in the neighbourhood?'"[2] Sir John Malcolm notices the same fact. "In some places men will not marry into a family where there is not a Dâkinî or witch to save them from the malice of others; but this name, which is odious, is not given to those persons by their relations and friends. They are termed Rakhwâlî or guardians."[3]

## WITCHES AND CATS.

One sign of the witch is that she is accompanied by her cat. This is an idea which prevails all over the world. Thus, in Ireland, cats are believed to be connected with demons. On entering a house the usual salutation is, "God save all here except the cat!" Even the cake on the griddle may be blessed, but no one says, "God bless the cat!"[4] The negroes in Mussouri say "some cats are real cats and some are devils; you can never tell which is which, so for safety it is well to whip them all soundly."[5] One explanation of the connection of witches and cats is that "when Galinthis was changed into a cat by the Fates, Hecate took pity on her and made her her priestess, in which office she continues to this day."[6] We have already seen that it is probably her stealthy ways and habit of going about at night which gave the cat her uncanny character.

[1] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 218.
[2] Rambles and Recollections," i. 84 sqq.
[3] "Central India," ii. 216.
[4] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 151.
[5] Leland, *loc. cit.*, 221.
[6] Brand, "Observations," 609.

The cat, say the jungle people, is aunt of the tiger, and taught him everything but how to climb a tree. The Orâons of Chota Nâgpur say that Chordeva, the birth fiend, comes in the form of a cat and worries the mother.[1] The Thags used to call the caterwauling of cats *Kâlî ki Mauj*, or the roaring wave of Kâlî, and it was of evil omen. The omen could be obviated only by gargling the mouth in the morning with sour milk and spitting it out. We have already seen the danger of killing a cat. Zâlim Sinh, the famous regent of Kota, thought that cats were associated with witches, and on one occasion when he believed himself exposed to enchantment, ordered that every cat should be expelled from his cantonment.[2]

## WITCH ORDEALS.

All the ordeals for witches turn on the efficacy of certain things to which reference has been already made as scarers of evil spirits.

Thus, the ordeal of walking over hot coals and on heated ploughshares was a common method of testing a witch both in India and in Europe.[3] Zâlim Sinh, however, generally used the water ordeal, a test which is known all over the world.[4] Even Pliny knew that Indian witches could not sink in water.[5] Manu prescribes water as a form of oath, and to this day it is a common form of oath ordeal for a man to stand in water when he is challenged to swear. Zâlim Sinh used to say that handling balls of hot iron was too slight a punishment for such sinners as witches, for it was well known that they possessed substances which enabled them to do this with impunity; so he used to throw them into a pool of water; if they sank, they were innocent; if they, unhappily, came to the surface, their league with the powers of darkness was apparent. A bag of cayenne pepper

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 252.
[2] Malcolm, "Central India," ii. 214, note.
[3] Leland, *loc. cit.*, 57; Brand, *loc. cit.*, 740; Clouston, "Popular Tales," i. 177.
[4] Tod, "Annals," ii. 106.
[5] "Natural History," vii. 2.

tied over the head, if it failed to suffocate, afforded another test.

"The most humane method employed was rubbing the eyes with a well-dried capsicum; and certainly if they could furnish the demonstration of their innocence by withholding tears, they might justly be deemed witches."[1] Akin to these tests is the folk-tale ordeal by which the calumniated heroine bathes in boiling oil to prove her chastity.[2]

### SANTÂL WITCH ORDEALS.

Forbes gives the tests in vogue in his day among the Santâls, whom he calls Soontaar. Branches of the Sâl tree (*Shorea robusta*) marked with the names of all the females of the village, whether married or unmarried, who had attained the age of twelve years, were planted in the morning in water for the space of four and a half hours; and the withering of any of these branches was proof of witchcraft against the person whose name was attached to it. Small portions of rice enveloped in pieces of cloth marked as before, were placed in a nest of white ants; the consumption of the rice in any of the bags was proof of witchcraft against the woman whose name it bore. Lamps were lighted at night; water was placed in cups made of leaves, and mustard oil was poured drop by drop into the water, while the name of each woman in the village was pronounced. The appearance of the shadow of any woman in the water during the ceremony proved her to be a witch.[3]

### WITCH TESTS, BILÂSPUR.

One of the most noted witch-finders in the Bilâspur District of the Central Provinces had two most effectual means of checkmating the witches. "His first effort was to get the villagers to describe the marked eccentricities of the old women of the community, and when these had been

[1] Tod, "Annals," ii. 638; Malcolm, *loc. cit.*, ii. 212.
[2] Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," i. Introduction, xxi; "Wideawake Stories," 429.
[3] "Oriental Memoirs," ii. 374 sq.

detailed, his experience soon enabled him to seize on some ugly or unlucky idiosyncrasy, which indicated in unmistakable clearness the unhappy offender. If no conclusion could be arrived at in this way, he lighted an ordinary earthen lamp, and repeating consecutively the name of each woman in the village, he fixed on the witch or witches by the flicker of the wick when the name or names were mentioned. The discovery of the witch soon led to her being grossly maltreated, and, under the Native Government, almost invariably in her death. Since the introduction of the British rule these cases are becoming year by year rarer; but the belief itself remains strong and universal, and the same class of superstitions pervades every-day life." [1]

## WITCH TESTS, BASTAR.

In Bastar, "a fisherman's net is wound round the head of the suspected witch to prevent her escaping or bewitching her guards. Two leaves of the Pîpal or sacred fig tree, one representing her and the other her accusers, are thrown upon her outstretched hands. If the leaf in her name fall uppermost, she is supposed to be a suspicious character; if the leaf fall with the lower part upwards, it is possible that she may be innocent, and popular opinion is in her favour." The final test is the usual water ordeal.[2]

## MISCELLANEOUS TESTS: EGGS.

Several persons, natives of the Khasiya Hills, were convicted of beating to death a man whom they believed to be a wizard. They confessed freely, saying that he destroyed their wives and daughters by witchcraft. One of the accused was the brother of the wife of the deceased. It appears that they discovered he was a sorcerer by the appearance of an egg when broken.[3] A similar case is reported among the Banjâras of Berâr.[4] The use of eggs

[1] "Central Provinces Gazetteer," 110 sq. [2] Ibid., 39
[3] "Reports Nizâmat Adâlat," 14th December, 1854.
[4] "Berâr Gazetteer," 197.

in this way opens up an interesting chapter in folk-lore. Thus, we have the famous legend which tells how a golden egg was produced at the beginning of all things, and from it Prajapati Brahma, the great progenitor of the universe, was produced. This piece of primitive folk-lore appears in the folk-tales in the numerous stories of children produced from eggs.[1] In one of the Kashmîr tales the egg of the wondrous bird has the power of transmuting anything it touches into gold.[2] Again, we have everywhere instances of the belief in the power of eggs as guardians against evil spirits. "An egg laid on Ascension Day hung to the roof of the house preserveth the same from all hurts."[3] Children in Northumberland, when first sent abroad in the arms of the nurse, are presented with an egg, salt, and fine bread. In India, we constantly see the eggs of the ostrich hung up in mosques and tombs to repel evil influences. We have the same idea in the use of eggs at Easter in England. In the Konkan, Kunbis give a mixture of eggs and turmeric to a man who spits blood; and to remove the effects of the Evil Eye, they wave bread and an egg round a sick person. The Sultânkârs, when their wives are possessed with evil spirits, offer rice, a fowl, and an egg, and the spirit passes away. The Beni Israels, to avert evil, break a hen's egg under the forefoot of the bridegroom's horse.[4]

There is another form of witch test in Chhatîsgarh, where a pole of a particular wood is erected on the banks of a stream, and each suspected person, after bathing, is required to touch the pole; it is supposed that if any witch does this her hand will swell.

## THE ROWAN TREE.

According to British folk-lore, one of the most potent antidotes for witches is a twig of the rowan tree bound with scarlet thread, or a stalk of clover with four leaves laid in

[1] Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," i. 98.
[2] Knowles, "Folk-tales," 77.
[3] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 164; Brand, "Observations," 108, 341.
[4] Campbell, "Notes," 83.

the byre, or a bough of the whitty, or "wayfaring tree."[1] Many, in fact, are the herbs which are potent in this way, of which the chief is perhaps that Moly, "that Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave." In India, the substitute for these magic trees is a branch of the tamarind, or a stalk of the castor-oil tree (*Palma Christi*). If, after receiving in silence an ordinary scourging by the usual methods, the suspected person cries out at a blow with the magic branch, he is certainly guilty.[2] These plants are everywhere supposed to exercise power over witches, and even in places like the North-Western Provinces, where witch-hunting is happily a thing of the past, a Chamâr or currier, a class which enjoy an uncanny reputation, is exceedingly afraid of even a slight blow with a castor-oil switch.

### WITCH-FINDING AMONG KOLS.

The Kolarian witch-finder's test is to put a large wooden grain measure under a flat stone as a pivot on which the latter can revolve. A boy is then seated on the stone supporting himself with his hands, and "the names of all the people in the neighbourhood are slowly pronounced. As each name is uttered a few grains of rice are thrown at the boy. When they come to the name of the witch or wizard, the stone turns and the boy rolls off."[3] This, no doubt, is the effect of the boy's falling into a state of coma, and losing the power of supporting himself with his hands.

### MARKS OF WITCHES.

Some witches are believed to learn the secrets of their craft by eating filth. We have already seen that this is also believed to be the case with evil spirits. Such a woman, in popular belief, is always very lovely and scrupulously neat

[1] "Folk-lore," ii. 290; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 188; Henderson. "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 201, 218 sq., 244; Aubrey, "Remaines," 247; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 290 sq.
[2] "Central Provinces Gazetteer," 157.
[3] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 199.

in her personal appearance, and she always has a clear line of red lead applied to the parting of her hair. Witches have a special power of casting evil glances on children, and after a child is buried, they are believed to exhume the corpse, anoint it with oil, and bring it to life to serve some occult purpose of their own. On the same principle the Kâfirs believe that dead bodies are restored to life, and made hobgoblins to aid their owners in mischief.[1] Indian witches, moreover, are supposed to keep a light burning during the ceremony of child exhumation, and if the father or the mother has the courage to run and snatch away the child just as it is revived, and before the witch can blow out the light, the child will be restored to them safe and sound.[2]

## CHARMS RECITED BACKWARD.

One well-known characteristic of witches is that she cannot die as long as she is a witch, but must while alive pass on her craft to another, is well recognized in India. Hence a witch is always on the look-out for some one to whom she may delegate her functions, and many well-meaning people have been ruined in this way through misplaced confidence in the benevolence of a witch.[3]

Indian witches also resemble their European sisters in their habit of reciting their charms backward,—

> He who 'd read her aright must say her
> Backwards like a witch's prayer.

And in "Much ado about Nothing," Hero says of Beatrice,—

> "I never yet saw man,
> How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
> But she would spell him backward."

This backward recital of spells appears all through folk-lore.[4] Indian witches are supposed to repeat two letters

[1] Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 240.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," ii. 6.
[3] See Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 199.
[4] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 32; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 183.

and a half from a verse in the Qurân, known only to themselves, and to say them backwards. We have the same belief in one of the tales of Somadeva, where Bhîmabhatta prays in his extremity to Mother Ganges, and she says, "Now receive from me this charm called 'forwards and backwards.' If a man repeats it forwards, he will become invisible to his neighbour; but if he repeats it backwards, he will assume whatever shape he desires."[1] The use of this charm enables the witch to take the liver out of a living child and eat it. But, in order to do this effectively, she must first catch some particular kind of wild animal not larger than a dog, feed it with cakes of sugar and butter, ride on it, and repeat the charm one hundred times. When dying, the breath will not leave the body of the witch until she has taught the two and a half letters to another woman, or failing a woman, until she has repeated it to a tree.[2]

## WITCHCRAFT BY MEANS OF HAIR, NAIL PARINGS, ETC.

The idea is common in folk-lore that a witch can acquire power over her victim by getting possession of a lock of hair, the parings of his nails, or some other part of his body. In the "Comedy of Errors," Dromio of Syracuse says,—

> "Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,
> A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
> A nut, a cherry stone."

In Ireland, nail-parings are an ingredient in many charms, and hair-cuttings should not be placed where birds can find them, for they take them to build their nests, and then you will have headaches all the year after.[3] The same is the case with the leavings of food, which should be thrown to the crows lest some ill-disposed person get possession of them. On the same principle English mothers hide away

[1] Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii. 221.
[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 7.
[3] Lady Wilde, "Legends," 197, 206. See instances collected by Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 64 sq.

the first tooth of a child.[1] There are numerous instances of these and similar beliefs all through the whole range of folk-lore. Hence natives of India are very careful about the disposal of hair-cuttings and nail-parings; and it is only at shrines and sacred places of pilgrimage where shaving is a religious duty that such things are left lying about on the ground. In the Grihyasûtras it is provided that the hair cut from a child's head at the end of the first, third, fifth, or seventh year shall be buried in the earth at a place covered with grass or in the neighbourhood of water. The carelessness shown at places of pilgrimage in this respect rests on the belief that the sanctity of the place is in itself a protective against sorcery. But some people do not depend on this, and fling the hair into running water. At Hardwâr the barber at the sacred pool takes the hair which he keeps collected in a bag and flings it into the air on the top of the neighbouring hill, at least he assures his patrons that he does so.

## WITCHCRAFT BY MEANS OF IMAGES.

Another means which witches are supposed to adopt in order to injure those whom they dislike, is to make an image of wax, flour, or similar substances, and torture it, with the idea that the pain will be communicated to the person whom they desire to annoy.

Thus, among Muhammadans, when the death of an enemy is desired, a doll is made of earth taken from a grave, or a place where bodies are cremated, and various sentences of the Qurân are read backwards over twenty-one small wooden pegs. The officiant is to repeat the spell three times over each peg, and is then to strike them so as to pierce various parts of the body of the image. The image is then to be shrouded like a corpse, conveyed to a cemetery,

[1] Aubrey, "Remaines," 11; and for examples of similar practices see Sir W. Scott, "Letters on Demonology," 273; Spencer, "Principles of Sociology," i. 243; Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 116; ii. 149; Lubbock, "Origin of Civilization," 241, 244; Henderson, *loc. cit.*, 148; Farrer, "Primitive Manners," 287; Oldenberg, "Grihya Sûtras," i. 57.; Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 70 sq.

and buried in the name of the enemy whom it is intended to injure. He will, it is believed, certainly die after this rite is performed. The practice has become a branch of the fine arts and numerous methods are detailed by Dr. Herklots.[1]

It is almost unnecessary to say that similar ideas prevail in Europe. The wounded Melun in "King John" says:—

> "Have I not hideous death within my view,
> Retaining but a quantity of life,
> Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax
> Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire?"

An old woman in Cornwall was advised "to buy a bullock's heart, and get a packet of pound pins. She was to stick the heart as full of pins as she could, and the body that wished her ill felt every pin run into the bullock's heart, same as if they had been run into her."[2] Examples of such images may be seen in the Pitt-Rivers collection at Oxford. Sir W. Scott describes how, under the threshold of a house in Dalkeith, was found the withered heart of some animal, full of many scores of pins; and Aubrey tells us of one Hammond, of Westminster, who was hanged or tried for his life in 1641 for killing a person by means of an image of wax. This was one of the charges made against the unfortunate Jane Shore.[3]

In Bengal, "a person sometimes takes a bamboo which has been used to keep down a corpse during cremation, and making a bow and arrow with it, repeats incantations over them. He then makes an image of his enemy in clay, and lets fly an arrow into this image. The person whose image is thus pierced is said to be immediately seized with a pain in his breast." In the folk-tales restoration to life is usually effected by collecting the ashes or bones of the deceased and making an image of them, into which life is breathed.[4]

[1] "Qânûn-i-Islâm," 222 sq.
[2] Hunt, "Popular Romances," 320.
[3] "Letters on Demonology," 273; "Remaines," 61, 228; "Folk-lore," iii. 385; iv. 256; Miss Cox, "Cinderella," 491.
[4] Ward, "Hindus," i. 100; Temple, "Legends of the Panjâb," i. Introduction, xvii; and compare Tawney, "Katha Sarit Sâgara," ii.

## WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE FOOTSTEPS.

It was a precept of Pythagoras not to run a nail or a knife into a man's foot. This, from the primitive point of view, was really a moral, not merely a prudential precept. For it is a world-wide superstition that by injuring the footsteps you injure the foot that made them. Thus, in Mecklenburgh it is thought that if you thrust a nail into a man's footsteps the man will go lame. The Australian blacks held exactly the same view. "Seeing that a Tutungolung was very lame," says Mr. Howitt, "I asked him what was the matter. He said, 'Some fellow has put bottle in my foot.' I asked him to let me see it. I found that he was probably suffering from acute rheumatism. He explained that some enemy must have found his foot-track, and have buried in it a piece of broken bottle."[1] The same feeling widely prevails in Northern India, and rustics are in the habit of attributing all sorts of pains and sores to the machinations of some witch or sorcerer who has meddled with their footprints.

## PUNISHMENT OF WITCHES.

The method by which witches are punished displays a diabolical ingenuity. The Indian newspapers a short time ago recorded six out of nine murders in the Sambalpur District as due to "the superstition, which is so general, that the spread of cholera is due to the sorcery of some individual, whose evil influence can be nullified if he be beaten with rods of the castor-oil plant. The people who are thus suspected are so cruelly beaten that in the majority of cases they die under the infliction."

A milder form of treatment is to make the witch drink the filthy water of a washerman's tank, which is believed to destroy her skill.[2] The punishment in vogue in Central India was to make witches drink the water used by curriers, leather being, as we have seen, a scarer of evil spirits, and drinking such water involves degradation from caste. In

[1] "Folk-lore," i. 157: Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 78.
[2] "Hoshangâbâd Settlement Report," 287.

more serious cases the witch's nose was cut off, or she was put to death.[1]

In Bastar, if a man is adjudged guilty of witchcraft, he is beaten by the crowd, his hair is shaved, the hair being supposed to constitute his power of mischief, his front teeth are knocked out, in order, it is said, to prevent him from muttering incantations, or more probably, as we have already seen, to prevent him from becoming a Loupgarou. All descriptions of filth are thrown at him; if he be of good caste, hog's flesh is thrust into his mouth, and lastly he is driven out of the country, followed by the abuse and execrations of his enlightened fellow-men. Women suspected of sorcery have to undergo the same ordeal; if found guilty, the same punishment is awarded, and after being shaved, their hair is attached to a tree in some public place. In Chhattîsgarh, a witch has her hair shaved with a blunt knife, her two front teeth are knocked out, she is branded in the hinder parts, has a ploughshare, which is a strong fetish, tied to her legs, and she is made to drink the water of a tannery.[2]

### WITCHCRAFT PUNISHMENTS AMONG THE DRÂVIDIANS.

In former times among the Drâvidian races persons denounced as witches were put to death in the belief that witches breed witches and sorcerers. A terrible raid was made on these unfortunate people when British authority was relaxed during the Mutiny, and most atrocious murders were committed. "Accusations of witchcraft are still sometimes made, and persons denounced are subjected to much ill-usage, if they escape with their lives."[3] Among the Bhîls suspected persons used to be suspended from a tree head downwards, pounded chillies being first put into the witch's eyes to see if the smarting would bring tears from her. Sometimes after suspension she was swung violently from side to side. She was finally compelled to drink the blood

[1] Malcolm, "Central India," ii. 212 sq.
[2] "Central Provinces Gazetteer," 39, 157.
[3] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 199.

of a goat, slaughtered for the purpose, which is regarded as a substitute for the sick man's life, and to satisfy the witch's craving for blood. She was then brought to the patient's bedside, and required to make passes over his head with a Nîm branch; a lock of hair was also cut from the head of the witch and buried in the ground, that the last link between her and her former powers of mischief might be broken.[1]

## OTHER WITCHCRAFT PUNISHMENTS.

Dr. Chevers has collected a number of instances in which the punishment of death or mutilation was inflicted on supposed witches. He quotes a case in 1802, in which several of the witnesses declared that they remembered numerous instances of persons being put to death for sorcery; one of them, in particular, proved that her mother had been tried and executed as a witch. In another case a Kol, thinking that some old women had bewitched him, placed them in a line and cut off all their heads, except that of the last, who, objecting to this drastic form of ordeal, ran away and escaped. In another, the nose-ring of a suspected witch was torn out with such violence as to cause extensive laceration. There are recorded instances of even more brutal forms of mutilation. A case occurred at Dhâka in which some people went to the house of a supposed witch, intending, as they said, to make her discontinue her enchantments, and ill-treated her in such a shameful way as to leave her in a dying state. She appears to have been in the habit of prescribing medicine for children, and this seems to have been the only basis for the reports that she practised magic.[2]

## DRAWING BLOOD FROM A WITCH.

One favourite way of counteracting the spells of a witch is to draw blood from her. Thus, Professor Rhys, writing

[1] Chevers, "Indian Medical Jurisprudence," 546 sq.
[2] Ibid., 12, note, 14, note, 393, 488, 492, note, 493, 514; Ball, "Jungle Life," 115 sq.; "Calcutta Review," v. 52.

of Manxland, says: "There is a belief that if you can draw blood, however little, from a witch or one who has the Evil Eye, he loses his power of harming you; and I have been told that formerly this belief was sometimes acted on. Thus, on leaving church, for instance, the man who fancied himself in danger from another would go up to him, or walk by his side, and inflict on him a slight scratch or some other trivial wound, which elicited blood."[1] In the First Part of "Henry VI." Talbot says to the Pucelle de Orleans,—

> "I'll have a bout with thee;
> Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee;
> Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch."

And Hudibras says,—

> "Till drawing blood o' the Dames like witches,
> They're forthwith cur'd of their capriches."

So at the present day in Mirzapur, when a woman is marked down as a witch, the Baiga or Ojha pricks her tongue with a needle, and the blood thus extracted is received on some rice, which she is compelled to eat. In another case she is pricked on the breast, tongue, and thighs, and given the blood to drink. The ceremony is most efficacious if performed on the banks of a running stream. This is probably a survival of the actual blood sacrifice of a witch.

## WITCH HAUNTS.

"In any country an isolated or outlying race, the lingering survivors of an older nationality, is liable to the imputation of sorcery."[2] This is exactly true of Asia. Marco Polo makes the same assertion about Pachai în Badakhshân. He says the people of Kashmîr "have extraordinary acquaintance with the devilries of enchant-

[1] "Folk-lore," ii. 293; Hunt, "Popular Romances," 315.
[2] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i. 113.

ment, insomuch that they can make their idols to speak. They can also by their sorceries bring on changes of weather, and produce darkness, and do a number of things so extraordinary, that without seeing them no one would believe them. Indeed this country is the very original source from which idolatry has spread abroad." In Tibet, he says, "are the best enchanters and astrologers that exist in that part of the world; they perform such extraordinary marvels and sorceries by diabolical art, that it astounds one to see or even hear of them."[1] So in European folk-lore the north was considered the home of witches, and in Shakespeare La Pucelle invokes the aid of the spirit under the "lordly monarch of the north."

In India, the same is the case with the Konkan in Bombay.[2] The semi-aboriginal Thârus of the Himalayan Tarâî are supposed to possess special powers of this kind, and Thâruhat, or "the land of the Thârus," is a common synonym for "Witchland." At Bhâgalpur, Dr. Buchanan was told that twenty-five children died annually through the malevolence of witches. These reputed witches used to drive a roaring trade, as women would conceal their children on their approach and bribe them to go away. In Gorakhpur, he says, the Tonahis or witches were very numerous, "but some Judge sent an order that no one should presume to injure another by enchantment. It is supposed that the order has been obeyed, and no one has since imagined himself injured, a sign of the people being remarkably easy to govern,"[3] and it may be added of the patriarchal style of government in those early days. Nowadays the accusation of witchcraft is practically confined to the menial tribes. The wandering, half-gipsy Banjâras, or grain-carriers, are notoriously witch-ridden, and the same is the case with the Dom, Sânsiya, Hâbûra, and other vagrants of their kin.

[1] Yule, "Marco Polo," i. 172, 175, with note; ii. 41; Sir W. Scott, "Letters on Demonology," 68 sq.

[2] Campbell, "Notes," 141.

[3] "Eastern India," ii. 108, 445.

## NONÂ CHAMÂRIN, THE WITCH.

At the present day the half-deified witch most dreaded in the Eastern Districts of the North-Western Provinces is Lonâ, or Nonâ, a Chamârin, or woman of the currier caste. Her legend is in this wise. The great physician Dhanwantara, who corresponds to Luqmân Hakîm of the Muhammadans, was once on his way to cure King Parikshit, and was deceived and bitten by the snake king Takshaka. He therefore desired his son to roast him and eat his flesh, and thus succeed to his magical powers. The snake king dissuaded them from eating the unholy meal, and they let the cauldron containing it float down the Ganges. A currier woman, named Lonâ, found it and ate the contents, and thus succeeded to the mystic powers of Dhanwantara. She became skilful in cures, particularly of snake-bite. Finally she was discovered to be a witch by the extraordinary rapidity with which she could plant out rice seedlings. One day the people watched her, and saw that when she believed herself unobserved, she stripped herself naked, and taking the bundle of the plants in her hands threw them into the air, reciting certain spells. When the seedlings forthwith arranged themselves in their proper places, the spectators called out in astonishment, and finding herself discovered, Nonâ rushed along over the country, and the channel which she made in her course is the Lonî river to this day. So a saint in Broach formed a new course for a river by dragging his clothes behind him. In Nonâ's case we have the nudity charm, of which instances have been already given.

## PÛTANÂ, THE WITCH FIEND.

Another terrible witch, whose legend is told at Mathura, is Pûtanâ, the daughter of Bali, king of the lower world. She found the infant Krishna asleep, and began to suckle him with her devil's milk. The first drop would have poisoned a mortal child, but Krishna drew her breast with such strength that he drained her life-blood, and the fiend.

terrifying the whole land of Braj with her cries of agony, fell lifeless on the ground. European witches suck the blood of children; here the divine Krishna turns the tables on the witch.[1]

## THE WITCH OF THE PALWÂRS.

The Palwâr Râjputs of Oudh have a witch ancestress. Soon after the birth of her son she was engaged in baking cakes. Her infant began to cry, and she was obliged to perform a double duty. At this juncture her husband arrived just in time to see his demon wife assume gigantic and supernatural proportions, so as to allow both the baking and nursing to go on at the same time. But finding her secret discovered, the witch disappeared, leaving her son as a legacy to her astonished husband.[2] Here, though the story is incomplete, we have almost certainly, as in the case of Nonâ Chamârin, one of the Melusina type of legend, where the supernatural wife leaves her husband and children, because he violated some taboo, by which he is forbidden to see her in a state of nudity, or the like.[3]

The history of witchcraft in India, as in Europe, is one of the saddest pages in the annals of the people. Nowadays, the power of British law has almost entirely suppressed the horrible outrages which, under the native administration, were habitually practised. But particularly in the more remote and uncivilized parts of the country, this superstition still exists in the minds of the people, and occasional indications of it, which appear in our criminal records, are quite sufficient to show that any relaxation of the activity of our magistrates and police would undoubtedly lead to its revival in some of its more shocking forms.

[1] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," ii. 202; Growse, "Mathura," 53.
[2] "Oudh Gazetteer," iii. 480.
[3] Hartland, "Science of Fairy Tales," 270 sqq.

# CHAPTER VI.

## SOME RURAL FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES.

*Ἐν δ' ἐτίθει νειὸν μαλακὴν πίειραν ἄρουραν,*
*Εὐρεῖαν, τρίπολον· πολλοὶ δ' ἀροτῆρες ἐν αὐτῇ*
*Ζεύγεα δινεύοντες ἐλάστρεον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.*

*Iliad*, xviii. 541-43.

THE subject of rural festivals is much too extensive for treatment in a limited space. Here reference will be made only to a few of those ceremonies which illustrate the principles recently elucidated from the folk-lore of Europe by Messrs. Frazer, Gomme, and Mannhardt.[1]

### THE AKHTÎJ.

The respect paid to ploughing is illustrated by the early Vedic legend of Sîtâ, who, like the Etruscan Tago, sprung from a furrow.[2] It is only in a later development of the story that she becomes the daughter of Janaka, and wife of Râma Chandra.

The agricultural year in Northern India begins with the ceremony of the Akhtîj, "the undecaying third," which is celebrated on the third day of the light fortnight in the month of Baisâkh, or May. In the North-Western Provinces the cultivator first fees his Pandit to select an auspicious hour on that day for the commencement of

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough;" Gomme, "Ethnology in Folk-lore;" Mannhardt, "Wald-und Feldkulte."
[2] Leland, "Etruscan Roman Remains," 96.

ploughing. In most places he does not begin till 3 p.m.; in Mirzapur the time fixed is usually during the night, as secrecy is in most of these rural ceremonies an important part of the ritual.

In Rohilkhand the cultivator goes at daybreak to one of his fields, which must be of a square or oblong shape. He takes with him a brass drinking vessel of water, a branch of the Mango tree, both of which are, as we have seen, efficacious in scaring spirits, and a spade. The object of the rite is to propitiate Prithivî, "the broad world," as contrasted with Dhartî Mâî, or "Mother Earth," and Sesha Nâga, the great snake which supports the world. Whenever Sesha yawns he causes an earthquake.

The Pandit first makes certain observations by which he is able to determine in which direction the snake happens at the time to be lying, because, in order to ease himself of his burden, he moves about beneath the world, and lies, sometimes north and south, north-west and south-east, and so on. This imaginary line having been marked off, the peasant digs up five clods of earth with his spade. This is a lucky number, as it is a quarter more than four. Hence Sawâi, or one and a quarter, has been taken as one of the titles of the Mahârâja of Jaypur. He then sprinkles water five times into the trench with the branch of the sacred mango. The object of this is by a form of sympathetic magic to ensure the productiveness of the crop, and scare the demons of evil which would injure it. In Bombay, at the beginning of the sowing season, a cocoanut is broken and thrown at each side of the plough, so that the soil spirits may leave and make room for Lakshmî, the goddess of prosperity, who is represented by the plough.[1] During all these proceedings the peasant watches the omens most carefully, and if anything inauspicious happens, the ceremony must be discontinued and recommenced at a luckier hour later on in the day. When he gets home, some woman of the family, who must not be a widow, who is naturally considered unlucky, presents him with curds and silver for

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 89.

good luck. He then stays all day in the house, rests, and does no work, and does not even go to sleep. He avoids quarrels and disputes of all kinds, and on that day will give neither grain nor money, nor fire to any one.[1] Next day he eats sweet food and balls of wheaten flour, toasted with curds and sugar, but carefully abstains from salt.

These usages have parallels in the customs of other lands. Thus, the rule against giving fire on the sowing day prevailed in Rome, and is still observed in the rural parts of England. In Iceland and the Isle of Man it is believed that fire and salt are the most sacred things given to man, and if you give them away on May Day you give away your luck for the year; no one will give fire from a house while an unbaptized baby is in it.[2]

In Râjputâna the custom is less elaborate. The first day of ploughing after the rains begin is known as the Halsotiya festival. Omens being favourable, the villagers proceed to the fields, each household carrying a new earthen pot, coloured with turmeric, the virtues of which have been already explained, and full of Bâjra millet. Looking to the north, the home of the gods, they make an obeisance to the earth, and then a selected man ploughs five furrows. The ploughman's hands and the bullock's hoofs are rubbed with henna, and the former receives a dinner of delicacies.[3]

In Mirzapur, only the northern part of the field, that facing the Himâlaya is dug up in five places with a piece of mango wood. The peasant, when he goes home, eats rich food, and abstains from quarrels.

All over the country the people seem to be becoming less careful about these observances. Some, without consulting a Pandit at all, go early to the field on the morning after the Holî fire is lighted, scratch the ground with a ploughshare, and on their return eat cakes and sweetmeats.

[1] On the rule against giving fire from his house, see Hartland, "Legend of Perseus," ii. 94.

[2] Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 74; "Folk-lore," iii. 12, 84, 90; Dyer, "Popular Customs," 14; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 103, 106, 203.

[3] "Gazetteer," iii. 237.

Others, on the first day after the Holî, when they hear the voice of the Koil, or Indian cuckoo at twilight, go in silence to the field and make a few scratches.[1]

Among the Drâvidian Hill tribes of Mirzapur, the ceremony seems to be merely a formal propitiation of the village godlings. Among the Korwas, before ploughing commences, the Baiga makes an offering of butter and molasses in his own field. This he burns in the name of the village godlings, and does a special sacrifice at their shrine. After this ploughing commences. The Kharwârs, before sowing, take five handfuls of grain from the sowing basket, and pray to Dhartî Mâtâ, the earth goddess, to be propitious. They keep the grain, grind it, and offer it at her annual festival in the month of Sâwan or August. The Pankas only do a burnt offering through the Baiga, and offer up cakes and other food, known as Nêuj. Before the spring sowing, a general offering of five cocks is made to the village godlings by the Baiga, who consumes the sacrifice himself. All these people do not commence agricultural work till the Baiga starts work in his own field, and they prefer to do this on Monday.

In Hoshangâbâd the ceremony is somewhat different. The ploughing is usually begun by the landlord, and all the cultivators collect and assist at the ceremony in his field before they go on to their own. "It is the custom for him to take a rupee and fasten it up in the leaf of the Palâsa tree with a thorn. He also folds up several empty leaves in the same way and covers them all with a heap of leaves. When he has done worship to the plough and bullocks, he yokes them and drives them through the heap, and all the cultivators then scramble for the leaf which contains the rupee. They then each plough their fields a little, and returning in a body, they are met by the daughter or sister of the landlord, who comes out to meet them with a brass vessel full of water, a light in one hand and the wheaten cakes in the other. The landlord and each of the cultivators of his caste put a rupee into her water vessel and take a

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 95.

bit of the cake, which they put on their heads. On the same day an earthen jar full of water is taken by each cultivator to his threshing-floor, and placed to stand on four lumps of earth, each of which bears the name of one of the four months of the rainy season. Next morning as many lumps as are wetted by the leaking of the water jar (which is very porous and always leaks), so many months of rain will there be, and the cultivator makes his arrangements for the sowing accordingly."[1]

In the Himâlaya, again there is a different ritual: "On the day fixed for the commencement of ploughing the ceremony known as Kudkhyo and Halkhyo takes place. The Kudkhyo takes place in the morning or evening, and begins by lighting a lamp before the household deity and offering rice, flowers, and balls made of turmeric, borax, and lemon juice. The conch is then sounded, and the owner of the field or relative whose lucky day it is, takes three or four pounds of seed-grain from a basin and carries it to the edge of the field prepared for its reception. He then scrapes a portion of the earth with a mattock, and sows a part of the seed. One to five lamps are placed on the ground, and the surplus seed is given away. At the Halkhyo ceremony, the balls as above described are placed on the ploughman, plough, and plough cattle; four or five furrows are ploughed and sown, and the farm servants are fed."[2] This custom of giving away what remains of the seed-grain to labourers and beggars prevails generally throughout Northern India.

A curious rite is performed in Kulu at the rice planting. "Each family in turn keeps open house. The neighbours, men and women, collect at the rice-fields. As soon as a field is ready, the women enter it in line, each with a bundle of young rice in her hands, and advance dabbing the young plants into the slush as they go. The mistress of the house and her daughters, dressed in their gayest, take their stand in front of the line, and supply more bundles of plants as they are wanted. The women sing in chorus as they work;

[1] "Settlement Report," 123 sq.
[2] Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 856.

impromptu verses are often put in, which occasion a great deal of laughter. Two or three musicians are generally entertained by the master of the house, who also supplies food and drink of his best for the whole party. The day's work often ends with a tremendous romp, in which every one throws mud at his neighbours, or tries to give him or her a roll in it. No such ceremony is observed in sowing other crops, rice having been formerly, in all probability, the most important crop. It is also the custom to make a rude image of a man in dough and to throw it away as a sacrifice to the Ishta Deotâ or household deity."[1] This can hardly be anything but a survival of an actual sacrifice to appease the field godlings at sowing time. The rude horseplay which goes on is like that at the Saturnalia and on the English Plough Monday.

Going on to the Drâvidian races, the Mundas have a feast in May at the time of sowing for the first rice crop. "It is held in honour of the ancestral shades and other spirits, who, if unpropitiated, would prevent the seed from germinating. A he-goat and a cock are sacrificed." Again in June they have a festival to propitiate the local gods, that they may bless the crops. "In the Mundâri villages everyone plants a branch of the Bel tree in his land, and contributes to the general offering, which is made by the priest in the sacred grove, a fowl, a pitcher of beer, and a handful of rice." In July, again, each cultivator sacrifices a fowl, and after some mysterious rites, a wing is stripped off and inserted in a cleft of a bamboo, and stuck up in the rice-field or dung-heap. If this is omitted, the rice crop, it is supposed, will not come to maturity. It appears more like a charm than a sacrifice. Among the Kols of Chota Nâgpur, there is a special dance, "the women follow the men and change their attitudes and positions in obedience to signals from them." In one special figure "the women all kneel and pat the ground with their hands, in tune of music, as if coaxing the earth to be fertile."[2]

[1] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 196.
[2] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology" 198.

## PROHIBITION OF PLOUGHING.

A clergyman in Devonshire informed Brand that the old farmers in his parish called the three first days of March "Blind Days," which were anciently considered unlucky, and on them no farmer would sow his seed.[1]

In Northern India there are certain days on which ploughing is forbidden, such as the Nâgpanchami or snake feast held on the fifth of the light half of Sâwan, and the fifteenth of the month Kârttik. Turning up the soil on such days disturbs Seshanâga, the great world serpent and Mother Earth. But Mother Earth is also supposed to sleep on six days in every month—the 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 21st, and 24th; or, as others say, the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th, 10th, 21st, and 24th. On such days it is inadvisable to plough if it can be possibly avoided. The fifteen days in the month of Kuâr which are devoted to the worship of the Pitri or sainted dead, are also an inauspicious time for agricultural work.

All these ceremonies at the commencement of the agricultural season remind us in many ways of the observance of the festivals of Plough Monday and similar customs in rural England.[2]

## THE RAKSHABANDHAN AND JÂYÎ FESTIVALS.

We have already noticed the use of the knotted cord or string as an amulet. On the full moon of Sâwan is held the Salono or Rakshabandhan festival, when women tie these amulets round the wrists of their friends. Connected with this is what is known as the barley feast, the Jâyî or Jawâra of Upper India, and the Bhujariya of the Central Provinces. It is supposed to be connected in some way with the famous story of Alha and Udal, which forms the subject of a very popular local epic. They were Râjputs of the Banâphar clan, and led the Chandels in their famous campaign against the Râhtaurs of Kanauj, which immediately preceded, and in fact led up to, the Muhammadan conquest of Northern India.[3]

[1] "Observations," 316.
[2] Chambers, "Book of Days," i. 94 sqq.; Aubrey "Remaines," 40 sq.
[3] Cunningham, "Archæological Reports," ii. 455.

In connection with this simple rural feast, a most elaborate ritual has been prescribed under Brâhmanical influence, but all that is usually done is that on the seventh day of the light half of Sâwan, grains of barley are sown in a pot of manure, and spring up so rapidly that by the end of the month the vessel is full of long, yellowish-green stalks. On the first day of the next month, Bhâdon, the women and girls take these out, throw the earth and manure into water, and distribute the plants to their male friends, who bind them in their turbans and about their dress.[1]

We have already come across an instance of a similar practice among the Kharwârs at the Karama festival, and numerous examples of the same have been collected by Mr. Frazer.[2] Thus, "in various parts of Italy and all over Sicily it is still customary to put plants in water or in earth on the Eve of St. John, and from the manner in which they are found to be blooming or faded on St. John's Day omens are drawn, especially as to fortune in love. In Prussia two hundred years ago the farmers used to send out their servants, especially their maids, to gather St. John's wort on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day. When they had fetched it, the farmer took as many plants as there were persons and stuck them on the wall or between the beams; and it was thought that the person whose plant did not bloom would soon fall sick or die. The rest of the plants were tied in a bundle, fastened to the end of a pole, and set up at the gate or wherever the corn would be brought in at the next harvest. This bundle was called Kupole, the ceremony was known as Kupole's festival, and at it the farmer prayed for a good crop of hay, etc."

We have the same idea in the English rural custom of "wearing the rose." There can be no reasonable doubt that all these rites were intended to propitiate the spirit of vegetation and promote the germination and growth of the next crop.[3]

[1] Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, ii. 886. [2] "Golden Bough," i. 249.
[3] "Hoshangâbâd Settlement Report," 124; Atkinson, *loc. cit.*, ii. 870; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iv. 197.

## THE DIWÄLÎ, OR FEAST OF LAMPS.

The regular Diwâlî, or Feast of Lamps, which is performed on the last day of the dark fortnight in the month of Kârttik, is more of a city than a rural festival. But even in the villages everyone burns a lamp outside the house on that night.

The feast has, of course, been provided with an appropriate legend. Once upon a time an astrologer foretold to a Râja that on the new moon of Kârttik his Kâl, or fate, would appear at midnight in the form of a snake; that the way to avoid this was that he should order all his subjects on that night to keep their houses, streets, and lanes clean; that there should be a general illumination; that the king, too, should place a lamp at his door, and at the four corners of his couch, and sprinkle rice and sweetmeats everywhere.

If the door-lamp went out it was foretold that he would become insensible, and that he was to tell his Rânî to sing the praises of the snake when it arrived. These instructions were carefully carried out, and the snake was so pleased with his reception, that he told the Rânî to ask any boon she pleased. She asked for long life for her husband. The snake replied that it was out of his power to grant this, but that he would make arrangements with Yamarâja, the lord of the dead, for the escape of her husband, and that she was to continue to watch his body.

Then the snake carried off the spirit of the king to Yamarâja. When the papers of the king's life were produced before Yamarâja his age was denoted by a cipher, but the kindly snake put a seven before it, and thus raised his age to seventy years. Then Yamarâja said: "I find that this person has still seventy years to live. Take him back at once." So the snake brought back the soul of the king, and he revived and lived for seventy years more, and established this feast in honour of the event. Much the same idea appears in one of Grimm's German tales.[1]

The original basis of the feast seems to have been the idea

[1] "Household Tales," ii. 276.

that on this night the spirits of the dead revisit their homes, which are cleaned and lighted for their reception. Now it is chiefly observed in honour of Lakshmî, the goddess of wealth and good luck, who is propitiated by gambling. On this night the women make what is called "the new moon lampblack" (*Amâwas Kâ Kâjal*), which is used throughout the following year as a charm against the Evil Eye, and, as we have already seen, the symbolical expulsion of poverty goes on.

Immediately following this festival is the Bhaiyya Dûj, or "Brothers' second," when sisters make a mark on the foreheads of their brothers and cause them to eat five grains of gram. These must be swallowed whole, not chewed, and bring length of days. The sister then makes her brother sit facing the east, and feeds him with sweetmeats, in return for which he gives her a present.

## THE GOVARDHAN.

Following the Diwâlî comes what is known as the Govardhan, or Godhan, which is a purely rural feast. In parts of the North-Western Provinces, the women, on a platform outside the house, make a little hut of mud and images of Gaurî and Ganesa; there they place the parched grain which the girls offered on the night of the Diwâlî; near it they lay some thorny grass, wave a rice pounder round the hut, and invoke blessings on their relations and friends. This is also a cattle feast, and cowherds come round half drunk and collect presents from their employers. They sing, "May this house grow as the sugar-cane grows, as Ganga increases at the sacred confluence of Prayâg!"

In the Panjâb "the women make a Govardhan of cow-dung, which consists of Krishna lying on his back surrounded with little cottage loaves of dung to represent mountains, in which are stuck stems of grass with tufts of cotton or rag on the top for trees, and by little dung balls for cattle, watched by dung men dressed in little bits of rag. Another opinion is that the cottage loaves are cattle, and the dung balls calves. On this they put the churn-staff, five white

sugar-canes, some parched rice, and a lamp in the middle. The cowherds are then called in, and they salute the whole, and are fed with rice and sweets. The Brâhman then takes the sugar-cane and eats a bit, and till then no one must eat, cut, or press cane. Rice-milk is then given to the Brâhmans, and the bullocks have their horns dyed and are extra well fed."[1]

The Emperor Akbar, we are told, used to join in this festival.[2]

The custom in Cawnpur, known as the Dâng, or "Club," Diwâlî is very similar. The cowherds worship Govardhan in the form of a little heap of cowdung decorated with cotton, and go round to the houses of the persons whose cattle they graze, dance to the music of two sticks beaten together and a drum played by a Hindu weaver, and get presents of grain, cloth, or money.[3]

## CATTLE FESTIVALS.

There are a number of similar usages in various parts of the country solemnized with the object of protecting the herds. Thus in Hoshangâbâd they have the rite of frightening the cattle. "Everyone keeps awake all night, and the herdsmen go out begging in a body, singing, and keeping the cattle from sleeping. In the morning they are all stamped with the hand dipped in yellow paint for the white ones, and white paint for the red ones, and strings of cowries or peacocks' feathers are tied to their horns. Then they are driven out with wild whoops or yells, and the herdsman standing at the doorway smashes an earthen water jar on the last. The neck of this is placed on the gateway leading to the cattle sheds, and preserves them from the Evil Eye. In the afternoon the cattle are all collected together, and the Parihâr priest sprinkles them with water, after which they are secure from all possible evil."[4]

[1] Ibbetson, "Panjâb Ethnography," 120.
[2] Blochmann, "Aîn-i-Akbari," i. 217.
[3] Wright, "Cawnpur Memorandum," 105; Buchanan, "Eastern India," i. 194.
[4] "Settlement Report," 17.

This reminds us of the custom of Manx cattle dealers, who drive their herd through fire on May Day, so as to singe them a little, and preserve them from harm.[1] The same was probably the origin of the bull-running in the town of Stamford of which Brand gives an account. So the Chinese make an effigy of an ox in clay, which after being beaten by the governor, is stoned by the people till they break it in pieces, from which they expect an abundant year.

We have already met with instances where the scape animal merges in a sacrifice. In Garhwâl, at the sacrifice in honour of Devî, the Brâhmans make a circle of flour filled with various sorts of colours. Inside this they sit and repeat sacred verses. Then a male buffalo is made to move round the circle seven times, and everyone throws some holy rice and oats over it. After this the headman of the village strikes it lightly on the back with a sword and makes it run, on which the people follow and hack it to pieces with their swords.[2]

So in Bengal, on the last day of the month Kârttik (October-November) a pig is turned loose among a herd of buffaloes, who are encouraged to gore it to death. The carcase is given to the Dusâdh village menials to eat. The Ahîrs, who practise this strange rite, aver that it has no religious significance, and is merely a sort of popular amusement. They do not themselves partake of any part of the pig.[3] It is plainly a survival of a regular sacrifice, probably intended to promote the fertility of the herds and crops.

Similar customs for the protection of cattle prevail in other parts of the country. Thus, in Mirzapur, at the Diwâlî, a little earthen bell is procured from the village potter, and hung round the necks of the cattle as a protective.

In Berâr, at the Pola festival, the bullocks of the whole village pass in procession under a sacred rope made of twisted grass and covered with mango leaves. The sacred pole of the headman is then borne aloft to the front. He

[1] "Folk-lore," ii. 303; Brand, "Observations," 7; Rhys, "Lectures," 520.

[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 92.

[3] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 290.

gives the order to advance, and all the bullocks, his own leading the way, file under the rope according to the respective rank of their owners. The villagers vie with each other in having the best decorated and painted bullocks, and large sums are often expended in this way. This rope is supposed to possess the magic power of protecting the cattle from disease and accident.[1]

In Northern India it is a common charm to drive the cattle under a rope fixed over the village cattle path, and among the Drâvidians of Mirzapur, two poles and a cross bar are fixed at the entrance of the village with the same object. The charm is rendered more powerful if a plough beam is sunk in the ground close by.

The custom of the silent tending of cattle has been already mentioned. At the cattle festival in Râjputâna, in the evening the cow is worshipped, the herd having been previously tended. "From this ceremony no rank is excepted; on the preceding day, dedicated to Krishna, prince and peasant all become pastoral attendants of the cow in the form of Prithivî or the Earth."[2] In some places the flowers and other ornaments of the cattle, which they lose in their wild flight, are eagerly picked up and treated as relics bringing good fortune. We have a similar idea in the blessing of cattle in Italy,[3] and this is probably the origin of the observance described by Aubrey, when "in Somersetshire, where the wassaile (which is, I think, Twelfe Eve), the ploughmen have their Twelfe cake, and they go into the ox-house to the cattle, and drink to the ox with the crumpled horn that treads out the corne."[4]

## THE SLEEP OF VISHNU.

According to the rural belief, Vishnu sleeps for four months in the year, from the eleventh of the bright half of the month Asârh, the Deosoni Ekâdashî, "the reposing

[1] "Berâr Gazetteer," 207
[2] Tod, "Annals," i. 631.
[3] Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology," i. 51.
[4] "Remaines," 40; Brand, "Observations," 17.

of the god," till the eleventh of the bright half of the month Kârttik, the Deothân, or "god's awakening." So the demon Kumbha Karana in the Râmâyana when he is gorged sleeps for six months. According to Mr. Campbell,[1] during these four months while the god sleeps demons are abroad, and hence there are an unusual number of protective festivals in that period. On the day he retires to rest women mark the house with lines of cowdung as a safeguard, fast during the day, and eat sweetmeats at night. During the four months of the god's rest it is considered unlucky to marry, repair the thatch of a hut, or make the house cots. His rising at the Deothân marks the commencement of the sugar-cane harvest, when the cane mill is marked with red paint, and lamps are lighted upon it. The owner of the crop then does worship in his field, and breaks off some stalks of sugar-cane, which he puts on the boundary. He distributes five canes each to the village Brâhman, blacksmith, carpenter, washerman, and water carrier, and takes five home.

Then on a wooden board about one and a half feet long two figures of Vishnu and his wife Lakshmî are drawn with lines of butter and cowdung. On the board are placed some cotton, lentils, water-nuts, and sweets; a fire sacrifice is offered, and the five canes are placed near the board and tied together at the top. The Sâlagrâma, or stone emblematical of Vishnu, is lifted up, and all sing a rude melody, calling on the god to wake and join the assembly. "Then all move reverently round the emblems, the tops of the cane are broken off and hung on the roof till the Holî, when they are burnt. When the worship has been duly performed, and the officiating Brâhman has declared that the fortunate moment has arrived, the cutting may commence. The whole village is a scene of festivity, and dancing and singing go on frantically. Till this day no Hindu will eat or touch the crop. They believe that even jackals will not eat the cane till then. The real fact is that till then the juice has not properly come up, and the cane is not worth eating. On

[1] Campbell, "Notes," 376.

the first day the cane is cut the owner eats none of it, it would bring him bad luck."

## CEREMONIES TO AVERT BLIGHT, ETC.

There are various ceremonies intended to save certain crops from the ravages of blight and insects. Blight is very generally attributed to the constant measurement of the soil which goes on during settlement operations, to the irreligious custom of eating beef, or to adultery, or to a demon of the east wind, who can be appeased with prayers and ceremonies.[2] No pious Hindu, if the seed fails, will re-sow his winter crop.

When sugar-cane germinates, the owner of the crop does worship on the next Saturday before noon. On one of the days of the Naurâtrî in the month of Kuâr the cultivator himself, or through his family priest, burns a fire sacrifice in the field and offers prayers. In the month of Kârttik he has a special ceremony to avert a particularly dangerous grub, known as the Sûndi. For this purpose he takes from his house butter, cakes, sweets, and five or six lumps of dough pressed into the shape of a pear, with some clean water. He goes to the field, offers a fire sacrifice, and presents some of the cakes to the field spirit. He then buries one of the lumps of dough at each corner of his field, and, having eaten the rest of the cakes, goes home happy.[3]

When field-mice do injury to the crop the owner goes to a Syâna, or cunning man, who writes a charm, the letters of which he dissolves in water and scatters it over the plants. The ancient Greek farmer was recommended to proceed as follows: "Take a sheet of paper and write on it these words, 'Ye mice here present, I adjure ye that ye injure me not, neither suffer another mouse to injure me. I give you yonder field (specifying the field), but if ever I catch you here again, by the help of the Mother of the gods, I will rend you in seven pieces.' Write this and stick the paper on an unhewn

[1] "Bareilly Settlement Report," 93 sq.
[2] Sleeman, "Rambles and Recollections," i. 235, 240.
[3] "Bareilly Settlement Report," 93.

stone in the field where the mice are, taking care to keep the written side uppermost."[1]

General Sleeman gives a case of a cowherd who saw in a vision that the water of the Biyâs river should be taken up in pitchers and conveyed to the fields attacked with blight, but that none of it should be allowed to fall on the ground in the way. On reaching the field a small hole should be made in the bottom of the pitcher so as to keep up a small but steady stream, as the bearer carried it round the border of the field, so that the water might fall in a complete ring except at a small opening which was to be kept dry, so that the demon of the blight could make his escape through it. Crowds of people came to fetch the water, which was not supposed to have any particular virtue except that arising from this revelation.[2]

## SCARING OF LOCUSTS.

Locusts, one of the great pests of the Indian peasant's life, are scared by shouting, lighting of fires, beating of brass pots, and in particular, by ringing the temple bell. In Sirsa, the Karwa, a flying insect which injures the flower of the Bâjra millet, is expelled by a man taking his sister's son on his shoulder and feeding him with rice-milk while he repeats the following charm: "The nephew has mounted his uncle's shoulder. Go, Karwa, to some other field!"[3]

In the Panjâb a popular legend thus explains the enmity between the starling and the locust. Once upon a time the locusts used to come and destroy the crops as they were ripening. The people prayed to Nârâyana, and he imprisoned them in a deep valley in the Himâlaya, putting the starlings to keep them in confinement. Now and again the locusts try to escape and the starlings promptly put them to death. The legend is probably based on the fact that both the starlings and the locusts come from the Hills, and about the same time.[4]

[1] "Folk-lore," i. 163.
[2] "Rambles and Recollections," i. 248.
[3] "Settlement Report," 256.
[4] "North Indian Notes and Queries," ii. 64.

Another device to scare them is based on the well-known principle of treating with high distinction one or two chosen individuals of the obnoxious species, while the rest are pursued with relentless vigour. "In the East Indian island of Bali, the mice which ravage the rice-fields are caught in great numbers and burnt in the same way that corpses are burnt. But two of the captured mice are allowed to live and receive a little packet of white linen. Then the people bow down before them, as before gods, and let them go."[1] So in Mirzapur the Drâvidian tribes, when a flight of locusts comes, catch one, decorate its head with a spot of red lead, salaam to it, and let it go, when the whole flight immediately departs.

## BETEL PLANTING.

When cultivators in the North-Western Provinces sow betel, they cook rice-milk near the plants and offer it to the local godling. They divide the offering, and a little coarse sugar is dedicated to Mahâbîr, the monkey god, which is taken home and distributed among the children. This is known as Jeonâr Pûjâ or "the banquet rite." The Barais, who make a speciality of cultivating the plant, have two godlings of their own, Sokha Bâba, the ghost of some famous magician, and Nâgbeli, the "creeper Nâga," or snake, who is connected with the sinuous growth of the tendrils.

In Bengal, the Baruis, a similar caste, worship their patron goddess on the fourth day of the month Baisâkh with offerings of flowers, rice, sweetmeats, and sandal-wood paste. Some do the Navamî Pûjâ in honour of Ushas, or the Aurora, on the sixth day of the waning moon in Asin. Plantains, rice, sugar, and sweetmeats are placed in the centre of the garden, from which the worshippers retire, but after a little time return, and carrying out the offerings, distribute them among the village children. In Bikrampur, Sunjâî, a form of Bhâgawatî, is worshipped.

They do not employ Brâhmans in the worship, because, they say, a Brâhman was the first cultivator of betel.

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 131.

Through his neglect the plant grew so high that he used his sacred thread to fasten up the tendrils, but as it still shot up faster than he could supply thread, its charge was given to a Kâyasth or writer. Hence it is that a Brâhman cannot enter a betel garden without defilement.[1] In another form of the story, the thread of the Brâhman grew up to the sky and became a betel tendril. So, in a Tartar story, the hop plant originates from the bow-string of a man that had been turned into a bear.[2]

All over India, the betel plant, perhaps on account of the delicacy of its growth, is considered as being very susceptible to demoniacal influence, and a woman or a person in a state of ceremonial pollution is excluded from the nursery. We meet with an instance of the same idea among the Ainos. "They prepare for the fishing by observing rules of ceremonial purity, and when they have gone out to fish the women at home must keep strict silence, or the fish would hear them and disappear. When the first fish is caught he is brought home and passed through a small opening at the end of the hut, but not through the door; for if he were passed through the door, the other fish would certainly see him and disappear."[3]

All these protective measures intended to guard the crop from defilement and demoniacal influence are rather like the old English rule of the young men and girls walking round the corn to bless it on Palm Sunday, an observance which Audley drily remarks in his time "gave many a conception."[4]

## SUGAR-CANE SOWING.

When sugar-cane is being planted, the sower is decorated with silver ornaments, a necklace, flowers, and a red mark is made on his forehead. It is considered a favourable omen if a man on horseback come into the field while the sowing is going on. After the sowing is completed, all the men

[1] Risley, "Tribes and Castes," i. 72. [2] "Folk-lore," iii. 321.
[3] Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 122.
[4] "Remaines," 9; Brand, "Observations," 118.

employed come home to the farmer's house and have a good dinner.[1] All surplus seed is carefully destroyed with fire, as it is believed that the plants grown from it would be worthless and produce only flowers and seed.

In the Panjâb, on the first day of sowing, sweetened rice is brought to the field, the women smear the outside of the vessel with it, and it is then distributed to the workmen. Next morning a woman puts on a necklace and walks round the field, winding thread on a spindle. This forms a sacred circle which repels evil influence from the crop. On the night of the Deothân, when Vishnu wakes from his four months' sleep, lamps are lighted on the cane mill, and it is smeared with daubs of red paint.[2]

## COTTON PLANTING.

When the cotton has sprung up, the owner of the field goes there on Sunday forenoon with some butter, sweetmeats, and cakes. He burns a fire sacrifice, offers up some of the food, and eats the remainder in silence. Here we have another instance of the taboo against speaking, which so commonly appears in these rural ceremonies.[3]

When the cotton comes into flower, some parched rice is taken to the field on a Wednesday or Friday; some is thrown broadcast over the plants, and the rest given to children, the object assigned being that the bolls may swell, as the rice does when parched. Many instances of symbolical or sympathetic magic of the same kind might be collected from the usages of other races. Thus, for instance, in Sumatra, the rice is sown by women, who, in sowing, let their hair hang loose down their back, in order that the rice may grow luxuriantly and have long stalks.[4]

When the cotton is ripe and ready for picking, the women pickers go to the north or east quarters of the field with

[1] "Bareilly Settlement Report," 93.
[2] "Karnâl Settlement Report," 151.
[3] "Bareilly Settlement Report," 93; "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 94; and compare Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii. 40; Lady Wilde, "Legends," 199.
[4] Frazer, "Golden Bough," iii. 94.

parched rice and sweetmeats. These directions are, of course, selected with reference to the Himâlaya, the home of the gods, and the rising sun. They pick two or three large pods, and then sit down and pull out the cotton in as long a string as possible without breaking it. They hang these threads on the largest cotton plant they can find in the field, round which they sit, and fill their mouths as full as possible with the parched rice, which they blow out as far as they can in each direction; the idea being, of course, the same as in the ceremony when the plant flowers. A fire offering is made and the picking commences.[1]

The custom in Karnâl is very similar. When the pods open and the cotton is ready for picking, the women go round the field eating rice-milk, the first mouthful of which they spit on the field towards the west. The first cotton picked is exchanged for its weight in salt, which is prayed over and kept in the house till the picking is over, when it is distributed among the members of the household and friends.[2]

## THE LAST SHEAF.

In Hoshangâbâd, when the reaping is nearly over, a small patch of corn is left standing in the last field, and the reapers rest a little. Then they rush at this piece, tear it up, and cast it in the air, shouting victory to their deities, Omkâr Mahârâja, Jhamajî, Râmjî Dâs, or other local godlings according to their persuasions. A sheaf is made of this corn, which is tied to a bamboo, stuck up on the last harvest cart, carried home in triumph, and fastened up at the threshing-floor or to a tree, or on the cattle shed, where its services are essential in averting the Evil Eye.[3]

The same custom prevails in the eastern districts of the North-Western Provinces. Sometimes a little patch in the corner of the field is left untilled as a refuge for the field spirit; sometimes it is sown and the corn reaped with a rush

[1] "Bareilly Settlement Report," 87 sq.
[2] "Karnâl Settlement Report," 183.
[3] "Settlement Report," 78.

and shout and given to the Baiga as an offering to the local godlings, or distributed among beggars.

This is a most interesting analogue of a branch of European folk-lore which has been copiously illustrated by Mr. Frazer.[1] It is the Devon custom of "Crying the Neck." The last sheaf is the impersonation of the Corn Mother, and is worshipped accordingly. We have met already with the same idea in the reservation of small patches of the original forest for the accommodation of the spirits of the jungle.

## FIRST-FRUITS.

There are many customs connected with the disposal of the first-fruits of the crop. The eating of the new grain is attended with various observances, in which the feeding of Brâhmans and beggars takes a prominent place. In Kângra, the first-fruits of corn, oil, and wine, and the first fleece of the sheep are not indeed actually given, but a symbolical offering is made in their stead. These offerings are made to the Jâk or field spirit to whom reference has already been made. The custom has now reached a later stage, for the local Râja puts the right of receiving the offerings on behalf of the Jâk to public auction.[2]

In the same way at Ladâkh, "the main rafters of the houses are supported by cylindrical or square pillars of wood, the top of which, under the truss, is, in the houses of the peasantry, encircled by a band of straw and ears of wheat, forming a primitive sort of capital. It is the custom, I was told, to consecrate the two or three first handsful of each year's crop to the spirit who presides over agriculture, and these bands are thus deposited. Sometimes rams' horns are added to this decoration."[3]

In Northern India the first pressing of the sugar-cane is attended with special observances. When the work of

[1] "Golden Bough," i. 333 sqq.; Brand, "Observations," 311; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 87; "Folk-lore," iv. 123; Hunt, "Popular Romances," 385.

[2] "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 56.

[3] "North Indian Notes and Queries," i. 57.

pressing commences, the first piece of sugar made is presented to friends or beggars, as is the first bowl of the extracted juice, and in the western districts of the North-Western Provinces some is offered in the name of the saint Shaikh Farîd, who from this probably gains his title of Shakkarganj, or "Treasury of sugar."

The Santâls have a harvest-home feast in December, at which the Jag Mânjhi, or headman of the village, entertains the people. The cattle are anointed with oil and daubed over with vermilion, and a share of rice-beer is given to each animal.[1]

Everywhere in treading out the grain the rule that the cattle move round the stake in the course of the sun is rigidly observed.

## CEREMONIES AT WINNOWING.

Winnowing is a very serious and solemn operation, not lightly to be commenced without due consultation of the stars.

In Hoshangâbâd, when the village priest has fixed a favourable time, the cultivator, his whole family, and his labourers go to the threshing-floor, taking with them the prescribed articles of worship, such as milk, butter, turmeric, boiled wheat, and various kinds of grain. The threshing-floor stake is washed in water, and these things are offered to it and to the pile of threshed grain. The boiled wheat is scattered about in the hope that the Bhûts or spirits may content themselves with it and not take any of the harvested corn. Then the master stands on a three-legged stool, and taking five basketsful from the threshed heap, winnows them. After winnowing, the grain and chaff are collected again and measured; if the five baskets are turned out full, or anything remains over, it is a good omen. If they cannot fill the baskets, the place where they began winnowing is considered unlucky and it is removed a few yards to another part of the threshing-floor. The five basketsful are presented

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 213.

to a Brâhman, or distributed in the village, not mixed with the rest of the harvest.

Winnowing can then go on as convenient, but one precaution must be taken. As long as winnowing goes on the basket must never be set down on its bottom, but always upside down. If this were not done, the spirits would use the basket to carry off the grain. The day's results are measured generally in the evening. This is done in perfect silence, the measurer sitting with his back to the unlucky quarter of the sky, and tying knots to keep count of the number of the baskets. The spirits rob the grain until it is measured, but when once it has been measured they are afraid of detection.[1]

In the Eastern Panjâb, the clean grain is collected into a heap. Preparatory to measuring, the greatest care has to be observed in the preparation of this heap, or evil spirits will diminish the yield. One man sits facing the north, and places two round balls of cowdung on the ground. Between them he sticks in a plough-coulter, a symbol known as Shâod Mâtâ or "the mother of fertility." A piece of the Âkh or swallow-wort and some Dûb grass are added, and they salute it, saying: "O Mother Shâod! Give the increase! Make our bankers and rulers contented!" The man then carefully hides the image of Shâod from all observers while he covers it up with grain, which the others throw over his head from behind. When it is well covered, they pile the grain upon it, but three times during the process the ceremony of Châng is performed. The man stands to the south of the heap and goes round it towards the west the first and third time, and the reverse way the second time. As he goes round, he has the hand furthest from the heap full of grain, and in the other a winnowing fan, with which he taps the heap. When the heap is finished they sprinkle it with Ganges water, and put a cloth over it till it is time to measure the grain. A line is then drawn on the ground all round the heap, inside which none but the measurer must

[1] "Settlement Report," 78 sq.

go. All these operations must be performed in profound silence.[1]

In Bareilly, when the whole of the grain and chaff has been winnowed, all the dressed grain is collected into a heap. "The winnower, with his basket in his right hand, goes from the south towards the west, and then towards the north, till he reaches the pole to which the treading-out cattle have been tethered. He then returns the same way, goes to the east till he reaches the pole, and back again to the south; then he places the basket on the ground and utters some pious ejaculation. Then an iron sickle, a stick of the sacred Kusa grass, and a bit of swallow-wort, with a cake of cowdung in a cleft stick, are placed on the heap, and four cakes of cowdung at the four corners; and a line is traced round it with cowdung. A fire offering is then made, and some butter and coarse sugar are offered as sacrifice. Water is next thrown round the piled grain and the remainder of the sugar distributed to those present."[2]

In the Etah District, the owner of the field places to the north of the pile of grain a threshing-floor rake, a bullock's muzzle, and a rope at a distance of three spans from the piled grain; and between these things and the pile he lays a little offering consisting of a few ears of grain, some leaves of the swallow-wort, and a few flowers. These things are laid on a piece of cowdung. He then covers the pile of grain with a cloth to protect it from thieving Bhûts, and puts in a basket three handfuls of grain as the perquisite of the village priest who lights the Holî fire. Something is also laid by for the village beggars. Then he sprinkles a little grain on the cloth, and fills a basket full of grain which he pours back on the pile as an emblem of increase. He then bows to the gods who live in the northern hills, and mutters a prayer; it is only at this time that he breaks the silence with which the whole ceremony is performed. The cloth is then removed, and the rite is considered complete.

[1] "Karnâl Settlement Report," 173. [2] "Settlement Report," 78.

## MEASUREMENT OF GRAIN.

All these precautions are based on principles which have been already discussed, and we meet in them with the familiar fetishes and demon-scarers, of which we have already quoted instances—the iron implements, the sacred grasses and plants, water and milk, cowdung, the winnowing fan, and so on.

All over Northern India a piece of cowdung, known as Barhâwan, "that which gives the increase," is laid on the piled grain, and a sacred circle is made with fire and water round it. Silence, as we have already seen, is a special element in the worship. All this rests on the idea that until the grain is measured, vagrant Bhûts will steal or destroy it. This is something like the principle of travellers, who keep a cowry or two in their purses, so that thieves may not be able to divine the contents. So, in a Talmudic legend we read, "It is very difficult for devils to obtain money, because men are careful to keep it locked or tied up; and we have no power to take anything that is measured or counted; we are permitted to take only what is free and common."[1]

In the Eastern Panjâb grain must not be measured on the day of the new or full moon, and Saturday is a bad day for it. It must be begun at dawn, or sunset, or midnight, when the Bhûts are otherwise engaged. Four men go inside the enclosure line with a wooden measuring vessel, and no one must come near them till they have finished. They sit facing the north and spread a cloth on the ground. One fills the measure from the heap with the winnowing fan, another empties it on the cloth, substituting an empty one for it. The man who has the measure puts down for every measure filled a small heap of grains of corn, by which the account is kept. Perfect silence must be observed till the whole operation is finished, and especially all counting aloud of the number of measures must be avoided. But when once the grain is measured, it is safe from the Evil Eye; the people are at liberty to quarrel over the division of it.[2]

[1] Conway, "Demonology," ii. 117.
[2] "Karnâl Settlement Report," 174.

The same rule of silence often appears in the custom of Europe. *Favete linguis* was the principle on such occasions in Rome. So in the "Tempest" Prospero says,—

> "Hush and be mute,
> Or else our spell is marred."

In the Highlands, on New Year's Day, a discreet person is sent to draw a pitcher of water from the ford, which is drunk next day as a charm against the spell of witchcraft, the malignity of Evil Eyes, and the activity of all infernal agency. So the baker who makes the bannocks on Shrove Tuesday must be mute as a stone; the cake on St. Mark's Eve must be made in silence, and the same is the rule on St. Faith's Day.[1]

The same rule of secrecy and silence is observed in the worship of Dulha Deo. Among the Gaiti Gonds, their great festival is held after the ingathering of the rice harvest, when they proceed to a dense part of the jungle, which no woman is permitted to enter, and where, to represent the great god, a copper coin has been hung up, enclosed in a joint of bamboo. Arriving at the spot, they take down the copper god in his case, and selecting a small area about a foot square, they lay on it the copper coin, before which they arrange as many small heaps of uncooked rice as there are deities worshipped by them. The chickens brought for sacrifice are loosed and permitted to feed on the rice, after which they are killed and their blood sprinkled between the copper coin and the rice. Goats are also offered, and their blood presented in the same manner. Until prohibited by the Hindus, sacrifices of cows were also common. On the blood some country spirits is poured as a libation to their deities. The copper coin is now lifted, replaced in its bamboo case, which is shut up with leaves, wrapped up in grass, and returned to its place in the tree, to remain there till it is required on the following year.[2]

[1] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 17, 90, 199, 384.
[2] Hislop, "Papers," 22.

## THE HOLI: ITS ORIGIN.

The most famous and interesting of the village festivals is the Holî, which is held in the early spring, at the full moon of Phâlgun. One account of its origin describes it as founded in honour of a female demon or Râkshasî called Dundhas, "she who would destroy many."

Another account connects the observance with the well-known legend of Hiranya-kasipu, "golden-dressed," and his son Prahlâda. Hiranya-kasipu was, it is said, a Daitya, who obtained from Siva the sovereignty of the three worlds for a million years, and persecuted his pious son Prahlâda because he was such a devoted worshipper of Vishnu. Finally the angry god, in his Nara-sinha or man-lion incarnation, slew the sinner.

Harnâkas, as the father is called in the modern version of the story, was an ascetic, who claimed that the devotion of the world was to be paid to him alone. His son Prahlâda became a devotee of Vishnu, and performed various miracles, such as saving a cat and her kittens out of the blazing kiln of a potter. His father was enraged at what he considered the apostasy of his son, and with the assistance of his sister Holî or Holikâ, commenced to torture Prahlâda. Many attempts on his life failed, and finally Vishnu himself entered a pillar of heated iron, which had been prepared for the destruction of Prahlâda, and tore Harnâkas to pieces. Then Holî tried to burn herself and Prahlâda together, but the fire left him unscathed and she was consumed. The fire is now supposed to be burnt in commemoration of this tragedy.

This legend has been localized at a place called Deokali near Irichh in the Jhânsi District, where Hiranya-kasipu is said to have had his palace. Just below it is a deep pool, into which Prahlâda was flung by the orders of his father, and the mark of the foot of the martyr is still shown on a neighbouring rock.[1]

Another legend identifies Holî with the witch Pûtanâ, who

[1] Führer, "Monumental Antiquities," 118.

attempted to destroy the infant Krishna by giving him her poisoned nipple to suck.[1]

Lastly, a tale told at Hardwâr brings us probably nearer the real origin of the rite. Holikâ or Holî was, they say, sister of Sambat or Sanvat, the Hindu year. Once, at the beginning of all things, Sambat died, and Holî in her excessive love for her brother insisted on being burnt on his pyre, and by her devotion he was restored to life. The Holî fire is now burnt every year to commemorate this tragedy.

## PROPITIATION OF SUNSHINE.

There seems to be little doubt that the custom of burning the Holî fire rests on the same basis as that of similar observances in Europe. The whole subject has recently been copiously illustrated by Mr. J. G. Frazer.[2] His conclusion is that "they are sun charms or magical ceremonies intended to ensure a proper supply of sunshine for men, animals, and plants. We have seen that savages resort to charms for making sunshine, and we need not wonder that primitive man in Europe has done the same. Indeed, considering the cold and cloudy climate of Europe during a considerable portion of the year, it is natural that sun charms should have played a much more prominent part among the superstitious practices of European peoples than among those of savages who live near the equator. This view of the festival in question is supported by various considerations drawn partly from the rites themselves, partly from the influences they are believed to exert on the weather and on vegetation. For example, the custom of rolling a burning wheel down a hill-side, which is often observed on these occasions, seems a very natural imitation of the sun's course in the sky, and the imitation is particularly appropriate on Midsummer Day,

[1] Buchanan, "Eastern India," ii. 480; Wilson, "Essays," ii. 233; Atkinson, "Himâlayan Gazetteer," ii. 867 sq.; "Panjâb Notes and Queries," iii. 127; Growse, "Mathura," 56.

[2] "Golden Bough," ii. 246; and see Conway, "Demonology," i. 65 sqq.; Henderson, "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties," 72 sqq.; Gregor, "Folk-lore of North-East Scotland," 167 sq.; Brand, "Observations," 165 sqq.

when the sun's annual declension begins. Not less graphic is the imitation of his apparent revolution by swinging a burning tar barrel round a pole. The custom of throwing blazing discs, shaped like suns, into the air, is probably also a piece of imitative magic."[1] In these, as in so many cases, the magic force is supposed to take effect through mimicry or sympathy.

It is true, of course, that the climatic conditions of Northern India do not, as a rule, necessitate the use of incantations to produce sunshine. But it must be remembered that the native of the country does not look on the fierceness of the summer sun with the same dread as is felt by Europeans. To him it is about the most pleasant and healthy season of the year, and people who are sometimes underfed and nearly always insufficiently dressed have more reason to fear the chills of December and January than the warmth of May and June. It is also usually recognized in popular belief that seasonable and sufficient rainfall depends on the due supply of sunshine.

## THE HOLÎ OBSERVANCES.

The Holî, while generally observed in Northern India, is performed with special care by the cowherd classes of the land of Braj, or the region round the city of Mathura, where the myth of Krishna has been localized, and it is here that we meet with some curious incidents which are undoubtedly survivals of the most primitive usages.

The ceremonies in vogue at Mathura have been very carefully recorded by Mr. Growse.[2] He notes "the cheeriness of the holiday-makers as they throng the narrow, winding streets on their way to and from the central square of the town of Barsâna, where they break into groups of bright and ever varying combinations of colour, with the buffooneries of the village clowns, and the grotesque dances of the lusty swains, who, with castanets in hand, caricature in their

[1] Frazer, "Golden Bough," ii. 268.

[2] "Mathura," 84 sq.

movements the conventional graces of the Indian ballet girl.

"Then follows a mock fight between the men of the adjoining village of Nandgânw and the women of Barsâna. The women have their mantles drawn down over their faces and are armed with long, heavy bamboos, with which they deal their opponents many shrewd blows on the head and shoulders. The latter defend themselves as best they can with round leather shields and stag horns, as they dodge in and out among the crowd, and now and again have their flight cut off, and are driven back upon the crowd of excited viragoes. Many laughable incidents occur. Not unfrequently blood is drawn; but an accident of this kind is regarded rather as an omen of good fortune, and has never been known to give rise to any ill-feeling. Whenever the fury of their female assailants appears to be subsiding, it is again excited by the men shouting at them snatches of ribald rhymes."

## THE LIGHTING OF THE HOLÎ FIRE.

Next day the Holî fire is lit. By immemorial custom, the boys are allowed to appropriate fuel of any kind for the fire, the wood-work of deserted houses, fences, and the like, and the owner never dares to complain. We have the same custom in England. The chorus of the Oxfordshire song sung at the feast of Gunpowder Plot runs,—

A stick and a stake
For King James's sake;
If you won't give me one,
I'll take two,
The better for me,
The worse for you.

This is chanted by the boys when collecting sticks for the bonfire, and it is considered quite lawful to appropriate any old wood they can lay hands on after the recitation of these lines.[1]

Mr. Growse goes on to describe how a large bonfire had

[1] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 414.

been stacked between the pond and the temple of Prahlâda (who, as we have already seen, is connected with the legend), inside which the local village priest, the Kherapat or Panda, who was to take the chief part in the performance of the day, was sitting, telling his beads. At 6 p.m. the pile was lit, and being composed of the most inflammable materials, at once burst into a tremendous blaze. The lads of the village kept running close round it, jumping and dancing and brandishing their bludgeons, while the Panda went round and dipped in the pond, and then with his dripping turban and loin-cloth ran back and made a feint of passing through the fire. In reality he only jumped over the outermost verge of the smouldering ashes, and then dashed into his cell again, much to the dissatisfaction of the spectators, who say that the former incumbent used to do it much more thoroughly. If on the next recurrence of the festival the Panda shows himself equally timid, the village proprietors threaten to eject him as an impostor from the land which he holds rent-free, simply on the score of his being fire-proof.

It is hardly necessary to say that this custom of jumping through the fire prevails in many other places. We have already had an instance of it in the case of the fire worship of Râhu. In Greece people jump through the bonfires lighted on St. John's Eve. The Irish make their cattle pass through the fire, and children are passed through it in the arms of their fathers. The passing of victims through the fire in honour of Moloch is well known.[1]

## THE THROWING OF THE POWDER.

In the Indian observance of the Holî next followed a series of performances characterized by rude horseplay and ribald singing. Next day came the throwing of the powder. "Handfuls of red powder, mixed with glistening talc, were thrown about. Up to the balconies, above and down on the

[1] "Hunt, "Popular Romances," 208; "Folk-lore," i. 520; ii. 128; Dyer, *loc. cit.*, 234.

heads of the people below; and seen through this atmosphere of coloured cloud, the frantic gestures of the throng, their white clothes and faces all stained with red and yellow patches, and the great timbrels with branches of peacocks' feathers, artificial flowers and tinsel stars stuck in their rims, borne above the players' heads, and now and then tossed up in the air, combined to form a curious and picturesque spectacle."

Then followed another mock fight between men and women, conducted with perfect good-humour on both sides, and when it was all over, many of the spectators ran into the arena, and rolled over and over in the dust, or streaked themselves with it on the forehead, taking it as the dust hallowed by the feet of Krishna and the Gopîs.

## THE HOLÎ IN MÂRWÂR.

Colonel Tod gives an interesting account of the festival as performed at Mârwâr. He describes the people as lighting large fires into which various substances, as well as the common powder, were thrown; and around which groups of children danced and screamed in the streets, "like so many infernals; until three hours after sunrise of the new moon of the month of Chait, these orgies are continued with increased vigour; when the natives bathe, change their garments, worship, and return to the ranks of sober citizens, and princes and chiefs receive gifts from their domestics."[1]

## THE ASHES OF THE HOLÎ FIRE.

The belief in the efficacy of the Holî fire in preventing the blight of crops, and in the ashes as a remedy for disease, has been already noticed. So in England, the Yule log was put aside, and was supposed to guard the house from evil spirits.[2]

[1] "Annals," i. 599 sq.

[2] Dyer, *loc. cit.*, 52.

## THE BASIS OF THE HOLÎ RITE.

We have seen that the primary basis of this and similar rites is probably the propitiation of sunshine. But the present observances in India are probably a survival of a very much more primitive cultus. We have already seen that in one form of the popular legend, Holî is the sister of Sambat, the year, and revived him from death by burning herself with his corpse. We find the same idea in Nepâl, where a wooden post adorned with flags is erected in front of the palace, and this is burned at night, representing the burning of the body of the old year, and its re-birth with each succeeding spring.[1]

The Drâvidian Hill tribes of Mirzapur do not perform the Holî ceremony like their Hindu neighbours, but on the same date the Baiga burns a stake, a ceremony which is known as Sambat Jalânâ, or "the burning of the old year."

In Kumaun each clan puts up the Chîr or rag-tree. A middle-sized tree or a large branch is cut down and stripped of its leaves. Young men go round and beg scraps of cloth, which are tied to the tree, and it is then set up in the middle of the village. Near it the Holî fire is burnt. On the last day the tree itself is burnt, and the people jump over the ashes as a cure for itch and similar diseases. While the tree is burning, men of other clans try to snatch away some of the rags. It is regarded as being very propitious to be able to do this, and the clan which loses is not allowed to set up the tree again. Faction fighting in order to gain the right of setting up the tree has practically ceased under British law.[2]

The ceremony in another form appears at Gwâlior. There, instead of a tree, they burn large heaps of cowdung fuel. The Marwâris erect a nude figure known as Nathurâm, made of bricks, of a most disgusting shape. This, when the pile of cowdung cakes is consumed, is broken to pieces

[1] Wright, "History," 41.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 92.

with blows of shoes and bludgeons. Another beautifully carved image of the same kind is paraded through the bazars and kept safely from year to year. This Nathurâm is said to have been a scamp from some part of Northern India, who went to Mârwâr and seduced a number of women, until he was detected and put to death. He then became a malignant ghost and began to torment women and children, and now his spirit can be appeased only by a series of indecent songs and gestures performed by the women. No Mârwâri household is without an image of Nathurâm, and a representation of him is laid with the married pair after the wedding, while barren women and those whose children die pray to him for offspring. He is in short a phallic fetish.

The Holî, then, in its most primitive form, is possibly an aboriginal usage which has been imported into Brâhmanism. This is specially shown by the functions of the Kherapat or village priest, who lights the fire. He is sometimes a Brâhman, but often a man drawn from the lower races. As we have seen, his duties among the Drâvidian races are performed by the Baiga, who is always drawn from the non-Aryan races. It seems probable that the legends connecting the rite with Prahlâda and Krishna are a subsequent invention, and that the fire is really intended to represent the burning of the old year and the re-birth of the new, which they pray may be more propitious to the families, cattle, and crops of the worshippers. The observance seems also to include certain ceremonies intended to scare the evil spirits which bring disease and famine. The compulsory entry of the local priests into the fire can hardly be anything but a survival of human sacrifice, intended to secure the same results; and the dancing, singing, waving of flags, screaming, the mock fight, and the throwing of red powder, a colour supposed, as we have seen, to be obnoxious to evil spirits, are probably based on the same train of ideas.

Finally comes the indecency of word and gesture, which is a distinct element in the rite. There seems reason to believe that in the worship of certain deities in spring, promiscuous intercourse was regarded as a necessary part of the

ceremony.[1] This appears at what is called the Kâhi ka Mela in Kulu, in which indecency is supposed to scare evil spirits.[2] We have already noticed the practice of indecency as a rain charm, and it seems at least a plausible hypothesis that the unchecked profligacy which prevails among the Hindus at the spring feast and at the Kajalî in autumn may be intended to repel evil spirits which check the fecundity of men, animals, and crops. The same idea probably also underlies the licentious observance of the Karama among the Drâvidian races. The same theory explains similar usages in Europe, such as the Lupercalia, Festum Stultorum, Matronalia Festa, Liberalia, and our own All Fools' Day, where the indecent part of the performance has disappeared under the influence of a purer faith and a higher morality, and a little kindly merriment is its only survival.

Of the mock fight as a charm for rain we have spoken already, and at the Holî it may be merely a fertility charm. Of these mock fights we have numerous instances in the customs of Northern India. Thus, in Kumaun, in former days at the Bagwâh festival the males of several villages used to divide into two bodies and sling stones at each other across a stream. The results were so serious that it was suppressed after the British occupation of the country.[3] The people in some places attribute the increase of cholera and other plagues to its discontinuance. In the plains, the custom survives in what is known as the Barra, when the men of two villages have a sort of Tug of War with a rope across the boundary of the village. Plenty is supposed to follow the side which is victorious.

Another of these spring rites is that known as the Râli ka Mela in Kângra, the Râli being a sort of rude image of Siva or Pârvatî. The girls of the village in March take baskets of Dûb grass and flowers, of which they make a heap in a selected place. Round this they walk and sing for ten days, and then they erect two images of Siva and

[1] "Folk-lore," ii. 178; "Herodotus," ii. 58.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 184.
[3] Ibid., iii. 17, 99.

Pârvatî, who are married according to the regular rites. At the conjunction or Sankrânt in the month of Baisâkh the images are flung into a pool and mock funeral obsequies are performed. The object of the ceremonial is said to be to secure a good husband.

In Gorakhpur this spring rite takes the form of hunting and crucifying a monkey on the village boundary. This is said to be intended to scare these animals, which injure the crops. But the rite seems to be intended to secure fertility, and is possibly the survival of an actual sacrifice.

Of the same class is what is known in the Hills as the Badwâr rite, where a Dom, one of the menial castes, is made to slide down a rope from a high precipice. The intention is to promote the fertility of the crops and expel the demons of disease.

## MARRIAGE OF THE POWERS OF VEGETATION.

Mr. Frazer has collected instances of the marriage of the powers of vegetation, of which we have a survival in the English King and Queen of the May. This seems to be the explanation of the remarkable rite among the Kharwârs, of which Mr. Forbes has given an account.[2]

"One of the most remarkable of the Kharwâr deities is called Durgâgiya Deotâ; this spirit rejoices in the name of Mûchak Rânî. She is a Chamârin by caste, and her home is on a hill called Buhorâj; her priests are Baigas. All the Kharwârs regard her with great veneration, and offer up pigs and fowls to her several times during the year. Once a year, in the month of Aghan, what is called the Kâruj Pûjâ takes place in her honour.

"The ceremony is performed in the village threshing-floor, when a kind of bread and kids are offered up. Once in three years the ceremony of marrying the Rânî is performed with great pomp. Early in the morning of the bridal day both men and women assemble with drums and

[1] "Indian Antiquary," xi. 297.
[2] "North Indian Notes and Queries," iii. 24.

horns, form themselves into procession and ascend the hill, singing a wild song in honour of the bride and bridegroom. One of the party is constituted the priest, who is to perform the wedding ceremony. This man ascends the hill in front of the procession, shouting and dancing till he works himself into a frenzy. The procession halts at the mouth of a cave, which does, or is supposed to, exist on the top of the hill. The priest then enters the cave and returns bearing with him the Râni, who is represented as a small oblong-shaped and smooth stone, daubed over with red lead. After going through certain antics, a piece of Tasar silk cloth is placed on the Râni's head, and a new sheet is placed below her, the four corners being tied up in such a manner as to allow the Râni, who is now supposed to be seated in her bridal couch, to be slung on a bamboo, and carried like a dooly or palanquin.

"The procession then descends the hill and halts under a Banyan tree till noon, when the marriage procession starts for the home of the bridegroom, who resides on the Kandi hill.

"On their arrival there, offerings, consisting of sweetened milk, two copper pice, and two bell-metal wristlets, are presented to the bride, who is taken out of her dooly and put into the cave in which the bridegroom, who, by the way, is of the Agariya caste, resides. This cave is supposed to be of immense depth, for the stone goes rolling down, striking the rocks as it falls, and the people all listen eagerly till the sound dies out, which they say it does not do for nearly half an hour.

"When all is silent, the people return rejoicing down the hill, and finish off the evening with a dance. The strangest part of the story is that the people believe that the caves on the two hills are connected, and that every third year the Râni returns to her father's house. They implicitly believe that the stone yearly produced is the same. The village Baigas could probably explain the mystery.

"In former times the marriage used to take place every year, but on one occasion, on the morning succeeding the

marriage ceremony, the Râni made her appearance in the Baiga's house. The Baiga himself was not present, but his wife, who was at home, was very indignant at this flightiness on the part of the Râni, and the idea of her going about the country the morning after her marriage so shocked the Baigâin's sense of propriety, that she gave the Râni a good setting down, and called upon her to explain herself, and as she could give no satisfactory account of her conduct, she was punished by being married every three years, instead of yearly as before."

The mock marriage of Ghâzi Miyân, to which some reference has been already made, a very favourite rite among the Musalmâns and low Hindu castes of the North-Western Provinces, is very possibly the survival of some non-Aryan rite of this kind, performed to secure the annual revival of the year and the powers of vegetation.

## THE DRÂVIDIAN SATURNALIA.

Some of the Drâvidian tribes enjoy the Saturnalia in other forms.

Thus, the Gond women have the curious festival known as Gurtûtnâ or "breaking of the sugar." "A stout pole about twelve or fifteen feet high is set up, and a lump of coarse sugar with a rupee in it placed on the top; round it the Gond women take their stand, each with a little green tamarind rod in her hands. The men collect outside, and each has a kind of shield made of two parallel sticks joined with a cross-piece held in the hand to protect themselves from the blows. They make a rush together, and one of them swarms up the pole, the women all the time plying their rods vigorously; and it is no child's play, as the men's backs attest next day. When the man gets to the top, he takes the piece of sugar, slips down, and gets off as rapidly as he can. This is done five or six times over with the greatest good-humour, and generally ends with an attack of the women *en masse* upon the men. It is the regular Saturnalia for the women, who lose all respect, even for a

settlement officer; and on one occasion when he was looking on, he only escaped by the most abject submission and presentation of rupees."[1]

The Bhîls of Gujarât plant a small tree or branch firmly in the ground. The women stand near it, and the men outside. One man rushing in tries to uproot the tree, and the men and women fall upon him and beat him so soundly that he has to retire. He is succeeded by another, who is belaboured in the same way, and this goes on till one man succeeds in bearing off the tree, but seldom without a load of blows which cripples him for days.[2]

All these mock combats have their parallels in English customs, such as the throwing of the hood at Haxey, the football match at Derby, the fighting on Lammas Day at Lothian, and hunting of the ram at Eton.[3]

## THE DESAULI OF THE HOS.

The Hos of Chutia Nâgpur have a similar festival, the Desauli held in January, "when the granaries are full of grain, and the people are, to use their own expression, 'full of devilry!' They have a strange notion that at this period men and women are so overcharged with vicious propensities that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the person to let off steam by allowing for the time full vent to the passions. The festival, therefore, becomes a sort of Saturnalia, during which servants forget their duty to their masters, children their reverence for their parents, men their respect for women, and women all notions of gentleness, modesty, and delicacy; they become raging Bacchantes. It opens with a sacrifice to Desauli of three fowls, a cock and two hens, one of which must be black, and offered with some flowers of the Palâsa tree (*Butea frondosa*), bread made from rice flour and sesamum seeds. The sacrifice and offering are made by the village priest, if there be one, or if not by any elder of the village who possesses the necessary legendary lore; and he

[1] "Hoshangâbâd Settlement Report," 126 sq.
[2] "Bombay Gazetteer," vi. 29.
[3] Dyer, "Popular Customs," 32, 75, 85, 353 sq.

prays that during the year they are going to enter on they and their children may be preserved from all misfortune and sickness, and that they may have seasonable rain and good crops. Prayer is also made in some places for the souls of the departed. At this period an evil spirit is supposed to infest the locality, and to get rid of it, men, women, and children go in procession round and through every part of the village with sticks in their hands, as if beating for game, singing a wild chant and vociferating loudly, till they feel assured that the bad spirit must have fled, and they make noise enough to frighten a legion. These religious ceremonies over, the people give themselves up to feasting, drinking immoderately of rice-beer till they are in a state of wild ebriety most suitable for the purpose of letting off steam."[1]

With these survivals of perhaps the most primitive observances of the races of Northern India we may close this survey of their religion and folk-lore. To use Dr. Tylor's words in speaking of savage religions generally, "Far from its beliefs and practices being a rubbish heap of miscellaneous folly, they are consistent and logical in so high a degree as to begin, as soon as even roughly classified, to display the principles of their formation and development; and these principles prove to be essentially rational, though working in a mental condition of intense and inveterate ignorance."[2]

[1] Dalton, "Descriptive Ethnology," 196 sq.
[2] "Primitive Culture," i. 22 sq.

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